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African Violet

The magazine exclusively dedicated to the growing of beautiful African violets.

May • June 2004 Volume 57 Number 3

AVSA Information

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The Magazine exclusively dedicated to the growing of beautiful African violets.

May • June Volume 57 Number 3

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Opera's Il Straniero
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Olive Ma Robinson

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Every attempt is made to keep articles technically correct. Since the growing of fine African violets can be achieved in many ways, the methods and opinions expressed by writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of AVSA.

President's Message

Dear AVSA Members,

Spring is finally here! It has been a difficult winter in some parts of the country, but now we can enjoy not only our African violets indoors, but our outdoor gardens as well. We all will be busy caring for our plants and appreciating their beauty.

Affiliate shows and sales are underway. Club members are working hard to put on attractive exhibits to share with the public and encouraging the sale of plants to encourage new growers. I hope you are remembering to distribute AVSA information when you inform the public of the fun of growing violets.

Printing of an updated culture brochure has been completed. Many thanks to Cheryl Salatino and the other members of the AVSA Publication Committee for their efforts. It is lovely lavender printing on white paper with friendly, but still informative, text. The office staff will be sending out the remainder of the current inventory first (we can't afford to waste them) and then start on the new supply. We hope you like them, and will use them to solicit new members.

Recently, I had the opportunity to be on Ralph Snodsmith's "Garden Hotline" radio program. I had thought it was a program heard throughout the northeast but learned that it is syndicated and heard across the country. The Union County Chapter, AVS had contacted him in the hope that he would help us publicize our 50th anniversary show. He asked if two of the club's members could come in to New York City to be interviewed on growing African violets. Christine Brenner, president of Union County Chapter, and I drove in to the city for the hour long program. Not only did we talk violets, but Ralph mentioned the local show and AVSA, and told his listeners they could obtain more information (the culture brochure) from the AVSA office. Requests, with self-addressed, stamped envelopes, have been pouring in to the office. Hopefully, many of these people will eventually join. If you have an opportunity to promote AVSA, please take it. My experience was fun and productive.

AVSA emissaries are traveling around the world. We received an invitation to send a representative to the Hong Kong Flower Show 2004. Kent and Joyce Stork agreed to go and went bearing culture brochures, many cuttings, as plants with soil are prohibited through customs, and gifts. They have promised to take pictures and write an article for the *African Violet Magazine*. Learning about their trip should be very interesting. Thank you, Kent and Joyce, for representing us and carrying our message to international growers.

In my recent messages to you, I have told you of Pauline Bartholomew's offer to give AVSA the rights to *Growing To Show*. Now I can report that the letter of transfer has been received, and AVSA has purchased the remaining copies of the current edition. Pauline's daughter has mailed most of them to the office, and they can be purchased by request to the office. You may have noticed that the ad in the *African Violet Magazine* has been changed to reflect this. Also, some copies were mailed to Tucson for sale at the AVSA table. Pauline graciously agreed to autograph several copies, and they were available at the annual auction.

I wish I could tell you about convention and the fun time it was but, although you are reading this in early May when convention is history, I'm writing in early March, and convention is still to come. I know that the Tucson area groups have been working and planning for a long time to provide an enjoyable convention and show for us all. Hats off to them. Surely, "Fiesta of Violets" will be a convention to remember.

Janet

Janet Riemer
President, AVSA

Editor's Notes

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I would like to encourage all of you to submit original material to the AVM. Many of our members have commented on articles that outline others' growing techniques and the ways they cope with growing problems. Please think about putting your experiences in writing to share with other African violet growers.

Due to family illness, **Dorothy Kosowsky** has given up her co-authorship of the Question Box column, which is shared with **Dr. Ralph Robinson**. Thank you so much, Dorothy, for the years of commitment to the AVM. Dorothy is from California, and we wanted to replace her with another writer from that part of the country. **Sue Haffner**, of Clovis, CA, will be our new Question Box columnist, and her first column will appear in the July/August issue.

We encourage all of you to come by the office if you're passing through southeast Texas. The building is located in Beaumont's Old Town Historic District and is one of the prettiest houses on North Street. A two-story structure, AVSA's national headquarters is very well maintained, with high ceilings, hardwood floors, and, of course, a few plant stands with a varied assortment of African violets. It is truly a special place in which to work. The secretary's work area, mailroom, library, and kitchen are located on the first floor. Upstairs are Jenny's office, my office, two large storage rooms, and the "sun room".

AVSA Office

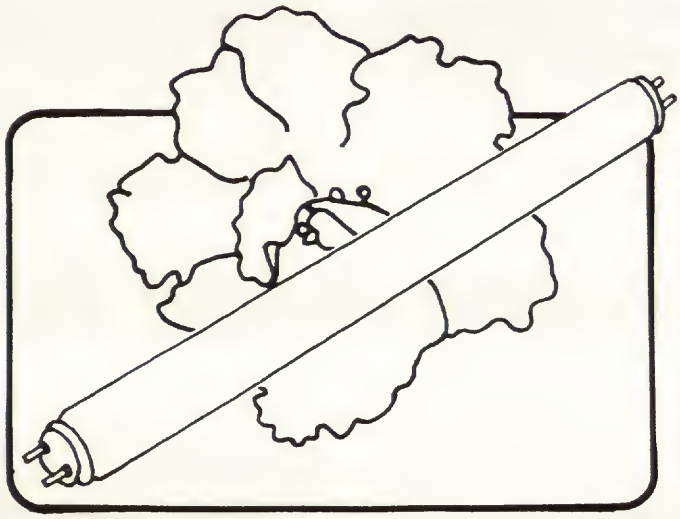
AVSA Secretary - Kelly Espinoza

In the mailroom

AVSA Office Manager - Jenny Daugereau

Let There Be Light

by Sharon Corton



When I get interested in a subject, I have a tendency to "study" it. I read a lot of books on the subject, listen to people talk, ask a lot of questions, and try different plants within the species to see which ones I can successfully grow. I have raised orchids for about ten years. My first orchid was an unnamed phalaenopsis hybrid that I got from Home Depot. I put her under lights, made sure she had good humidity, fed her Peter's African violet fertilizer (not mentioned in any of the orchid books as the fertilizer to use for orchids!), and named her "Freckles". The second time she bloomed almost perfectly and I decided to put her on the "show table" at one of the monthly meetings of the Massachusetts Orchid Society, of which I was a member. Nationally known judges awarded my little "Freckles" a green ribbon for excellence! What a wonderful moment of triumph! I felt that I obviously knew how to grow low-light plants.

I had raised supermarket violets, and I really loved their blossoms and their ease of growing. So, when my husband suggested that "we" get into raising African violets, I immediately jumped at the idea and figured it was something we could do together. A few months later, we went to the Massachusetts Horticultural Show, found the Bay State African Violet Society booth, and got information about joining. I ended up with over 200 violets, and my husband took care of his 6! I studied the subject of violets. I joined the local club, the state club, and the African Violet Society of America. I studied the wonderful AVSA magazine, talked to people, listened and watched at the club meetings, and learned from the masters.

The first year, I showed in novice and won blue ribbons. The amount of bloom was just so-so, and the symmetry was fair. But nobody else had entered novice, so I won. I didn't show the next year because I had symmetry and no bloom. I didn't show the following year because my plants had bloom but no symmetry. I didn't show this past year because my plants didn't have good symmetry or bloom! I fertilized on schedule the way my mentors did, I watered correctly, and I groomed the violets lovingly, but I didn't have plants worth showing. Even after blossom boost, the plants never bloomed. I could start a plantlet from a leaf, but some of those plantlets waited almost one year to be big enough to pot up! My beloved violets just sat there, waiting. What were they all waiting for? What was I missing?

The one thing I knew I was doing differently than other club members was my lighting. Most members used one grow light and one cool white florescent light per shelf, with some members using just two florescent cool white lights per shelf. I was using one channel of grow lights per shelf. Although I gave my plants almost half the light of others, I figured that because it was enough light for low-light orchids, it was enough light for violets. I even had a photometer to check the available light for the plants!

This past year, my plants were dying from mites, and the count of my collection diminished. I had many single channel lights that weren't in use, so I finally changed my lighting arrangement. Each shelf now had two lights, one being a grow light and the other one a cool white. Much to my amazement, within days and weeks my violet plants totally changed! They created their own symmetry without me having to do major grooming, and even on a balanced fertilizer, they gleefully started to bloom! My little plantlets rapidly reached a size to pot up!

My violets showed me that one species of plants' requirements are not always another species' requirements. My indoor garden went from thumping out "Chop Sticks" to a full chorus of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony! What a miracle! I need to stop trying to recreate the wheel, finally, LET THERE BE LIGHT!

From *Ye Bay Stater*, publication of the Bay State AVS

For Beginners

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Bringing Home Baby

By the time this column is printed, the 2004 AVSA National Convention in Tucson, Arizona, will be a fond memory for many of us. I am sure that we all had a great time learning new things in the various workshops, judging and/or seeing the beautiful African violet show, speaking with old and new friends, and most importantly, purchasing those new plants that wouldn't let us leave the sales room without them.

Spring is an exciting time for African violet growers. It's the time when all the commercial growers send out their new catalogs filled with new and old varieties. Whether you purchase new plants at the convention, at a local show and sale, through a catalog, off the internet, or at your neighborhood store, eventually you will bring that plant back to your house and you will need to introduce it to your present collection. Which brings me to the topic of this column... What to do with new plants when you bring them home.

It is important to remember that *regardless from whom you acquired the plant, there is a chance that it may be carrying a pest or disease that could spread to your other African violets.* No one wants to bring pests and disease into their home and plant collections so cautions must be taken.

When you get a shipment of plants, you must first unwrap them. Many commercial growers ship their plants in rolled newspaper, a sleeve of plastic, and/or cover the soil with plastic wrap. Carefully unwrap the plant, taking care to not damage the foliage. Keep track of the name tags and which plant is which. Many first time growers are disappointed when they unwrap a plant and find a scrawny little plantlet when they expected a large blooming plant. Have patience, in a short while and with proper care, that plantlet will become that blooming show winner. Large plants are not easily shipped without major damage occurring. After you unwrap the plant, remove any damaged leaves. If the plant is in bloom, check the bloom to make sure it is "true", and then disbud the plant. Many first time growers do not want to remove the blooms, but there is good reason to disbud the new plant. (1) Blooms use energy from the plant. You want the plant to take off under your growing conditions so removing the blooms will increase the availability of energy for foliage growth and root development. (2) The plant was just shipped and is undergoing stress in its new environment. The blooms will die soon anyway. (3) Most importantly, removing the blossoms will eliminate most of the thrips if the plant is infected with these insects. Do not worry, the plant will bloom again and will be healthier if you disbud now.

I have heard of and read many techniques for bringing a new plant into the house. When I first started growing African violets, I was told that new plants needed to be quarantined for at least six months, meaning that the new plants should not be in contact with my collection for this time period. Plants should be grown on a separate grow cart, preferably in a different room than my other African violet plants. I was also told not to transplant new plants because the shock of a new environment (temperature, humidity, fertilizer, and light cycle) was enough. A new soil mix on a new plant would add additional stress and cause harm to the plant.

After I started growing African violets seriously, I rapidly discovered that I had neither the time, patience, nor the room to quarantine new plants away from my other plants for long periods of time. So I developed my own strategy for adding new plants to my collection.

I asked fellow African violet growers in my local club what they did when adding new plants, and I was pleasantly surprised to find no one followed the strict regime outlined above. *I would like to interject a very useful piece of knowledge here. The best source of information for any African violet grower,*

from beginners to experienced show winners, is local club members. People in local clubs have tried many new and different techniques with varied results. Since growing conditions vary in different parts of the country, the local club members know what growing conditions work best in the local area.

Back to bringing new plants into the house... One new club member told me that she just brought the new plants into her plant room, discarded spent blossoms and dead leaves, and mixed the new African violets with her other plants. I would not recommend this method because the chance of introducing unwanted pests to your collection is too great. A second club member told me that he disbuds new plants, sprays them with an insecticide, and then places the new African violets in a separate room for at least one month before introducing them to his collection. A third member told me that he disbuds all new plants, removes all the soil from the root balls, washes the plants in warm water, sprays with an insecticide, and repots the plants in his potting mix after their foliage dries. The plants are then added to his collection.

I have learned by trial and error portions from each method. When I bring a plant home, I disbud the plant and remove dead leaves. Since I am usually doing a million things at once when I get a new plant, I then place the plant on a saucer on my dinning room table (my collection is in another room on the other side of the house) until I am ready to care for the plant (one to 14 days later). Watering the plant with room temperature water every few days is essential so the plant doesn't dry out. When I get to working on the new African violets, I lightly spray them with an insecticide and fungicide, being careful not to spray too close to the plant (the refrigerant in the spray can damage foliage). I use "Rose-Pride®" or "Orthenex®" made by Ortho; this product contains the insecticide Orthene to control thrips and other insects and the fungicide Funginex to control powdery mildew and other fungi. I repot the plants in my potting mix and let them sit a few hours to overnight. Then, I place the plants on reservoirs (wick water) and place them in my African violet collection. In the nine years I have been growing African violets, I have had only one or two problems using this method.

Regardless of which method you use when bringing a new African violet into your home and introducing it into your collection, a few guidelines must be remembered and followed: (1) Disbud all bloom stalks and remove dead or dying foliage. (2) Spray all new African violets with an insecticide and a fungicide. Even the most trustworthy sellers can have an unknown problem. (3) Repot the new plant in your African violet mix as soon as possible. The plant will be living in your mix as long as you own it so it may as well get used to it as soon as possible.

Lastly, to us avid African violet growers there is nothing as exciting as bringing home a new, scrawny African violet and watching it grow into a beautiful plant with a huge head of blossoms. Care must be given to your plants from the moment you bring them home. Proper care ensures that the plant will be healthy and vivacious and that they will not spread pests and disease to other African violets in your collection.

In Memory

LEONTINE "LEO" MASCHEK

The AVS of Beaumont, Texas, lost a dear member when Leontine "Leo" Maschek passed away recently at the age of 95. An avid golfer and traveler, she was active in the community and belonged to several service clubs, but African violets were very special to her. She worked tirelessly on the dedication of the US Postal African violet stamp in Beaumont, attended many conventions and was friends with many members of other violet clubs. A Past President of the AVS of Beaumont, Leo served in other offices as well, and was always ready to participate in local shows, taking more than her share of blue ribbons. A dear friend of the AVSA office staff, Leo helped tend to the violets growing in the AVSA office for many years.

ELAINE GORDON

Elaine Gordon of Elgin, PA, passed away in December, 2003. Elaine was a charter member of the AVS of Northern Illinois, a Life Member of AVSA and many African violet society affiliates. At one time she was the fastest adult speed skater in America. She was inducted into the Speed Skating Hall of Fame in 1978 after winning both the National Outdoor and North American Indoor Championships. Elaine grew her violets and gesneriads like a champion, winning many awards and ribbons.

HELEN STAUFFER

Helen Stauffer of Memphis, TN, passed away in January, 2003. A retired nurse, Helen was an active member of the Memphis AVS, and an African violet judge.

ALICE M. COURAGE

Alice M. Courage passed away recently. She was a Past President of Bay State AVS, AGGS, and NEAGGS. Alice was also the founder of Quannapowitt AVC. She was an active Master Judge and Teacher, both in AVSA and AGGS. Alice shared her enthusiasm for growing beautiful plants by encouraging members of these many organizations to become judges and designers.

LEILA EGENITES

The following is an excerpt of an email from Joan Halford in South Africa:

"The news of the passing of a good friend of mine, Leila Egenites, saddens me greatly.

Through the mode of letter writing, no e-mails in those days, I found Leila in 1970 and asked her to send me my very first consignment of African violet leaves. From the long list of suppliers who sent consignments overseas I chose Leila because she lived so near to JFK International Airport, and there was only one weekly flight to South Africa, on a Sunday night. Leila agreed to a trial run! I received the leaves, and had them planted in less than 30 hours. We were both delighted.

This arrangement continued for many years, until Leila left to live in Florida. Leila loved her plants, was a wonderful help to me in my early years of growing, and a violet friend that I could always turn to for help when in need. She will be sadly missed by all her friends and associates in our world of African violets."

AVS of Spartanburg, South Carolina, said goodbye to three valuable members:

SUSIE SLONE

Mrs. Susie Slone passed away in May, 2003. She was a very energetic member of the club. Generous and a valuable friend, Mrs. Slone was always busy and helpful at the club's plant sales.

ANNE "TIGER' COTHAN

Ms. Anne "Tiger" Cothan, was a true plant person who passed away in January of 2004. She loved all sorts of flowers and generously shared them with friends, including the African violets purchased at the club's sales.

WALTER SODERBERG

Mr. Walter Soderberg, at 90 years old, was still very helpful to club members and was always ready to lend a hand. He was a generous man and gave away as many African violets as he grew. Mr. Soderberg passed away in February, 2004.

All of these members are sorely missed by the remaining members of the club.

In Search of New Violets

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Many of the questions sent in by readers ask about whether a particular trait is a genetic dominant or recessive. Lists have been made and published regarding the inheritance pattern of flower color, flower shape, petal number, leaf types, and a wide variety of other African violet traits. However, some traits do not inherit as a simple genetic dominant or recessive. Some traits are due to multiple genes interacting together in additive ways. These traits tend to show overlapping phenotype categories or what is known as continuous variation. Height in humans is a good example of a multiple gene trait with a continuous distribution of phenotypes. There isn't a simple dominant for "tall" or a recessive for "short", but several genes that interact together to give the person's height. Some traits in African violets are likely controlled by multiple genes. Several questions in this month's column are about traits that show continuous variation and are probably controlled by multiple genes.

Q: *In African violets, what is the inheritance of the number of flowers per stem? Is it an additive trait, coming from multiple genes?*

A: The number of flowers per stem is not a simple case of dominant or recessive traits. While there is a strong genetic component to the number of flowers, environmental factors will also influence the total number of flowers produced. I would suggest that you select plants for high numbers of flowers when choosing parents for a cross. This should keep a high number of flowers in the offspring.

If you find a plant that has other desirable traits, but carries few flowers per stem, try crossing the plant with one of a similar color or type that has a higher number of flowers. Select the F1 plants with the highest number of flowers and cross them to get the F2 generation. Hopefully, you'll be able to find offspring in this generation that conserved the desirable trait but has a higher flower number per stem.

Q: *What is the inheritance of flower size? Is it additive, resulting from several genes interacting? I like big flowers on my plants.*

A: My feel for this trait is that it is likely a multiple gene trait and additive. However, I don't have any strong proof. If you hybridize large flowers X large flowers you should conserve the trait and get many offspring with large flowers. There is likely a maximum size that can be achieved due to physical limitations (stalk support etc.). Hybridizers in the past were able to select for large flower size especially in standard plants. As a result, flower size is much larger today than it was in the past.

Q: *Do African violets suffer from inbreeding depression?*

A: Inbreeding depression is the loss of vigor in a plant due to sever inbreeding. This effect has been observed in a number of crop plants. I'm not aware of a problem of inbreeding depression in African violets, but that doesn't mean there isn't one. African violets were reproduced mainly from seed in the very early days. If inbreeding was going to be a problem, it should have shown up then. However, I've not seen any references to such a problem, which might mean that the early growers didn't know what to look for.

Some of the European commercial growers are reproducing African violets from seed rather than leaves because they can grow the plants better this way as a crop plant. They have produced some strains of seed that are reported to breed true to type. This would only happen if they were severely inbred. Problems with inbreeding depression were not reported. I don't know if this was luck or a good choice of the original starting plants.

Q: *What is the inheritance of the shape of fantasy dots? Some have round spots, but I have seen some that have long streaks and strips of color.*

A: The difference in the shape of fantasy dots is due to how many copies of the fantasy gene is in the plant. Heterozygous flowers have only one copy of the gene and tend to produce more streaks. This is due to the gene staying on or off for longer periods of time as the flower develops, hence the resulting spot is larger or more of a streak. Homozygous plants have two copies of the fantasy gene. The switching from on and off happens more frequently because there are two copies of the gene which gives smaller dots of color.

The original plant of 'Fantasy' that first showed the trait was a heterozygous mutation. The pictures of the flowers show the streak type of fantasy which would support my argument. Breeding fantasy X fantasy to give mostly fantasy offspring has given us the homozygous plants with the smaller dot patterns.

Q: *In a chimera, what tissue type forms the stamens? Will the pollen carry the genetic traits of the center stripe, the edge stripe, or both?*

A: In chimeras with wide center stripes, I would expect the stamens and ovaries to be made from the center stripe tissue and to show the genetic traits of this layer. Say, for example, that the center stripe is blue and the edges are white. The pollen should carry the blue flower color trait, but the white flower color might also be present as a recessive trait. In the reverse situation, say a white center stripe and blue edges, I wouldn't expect the white areas to carry the trait for blue at all. If they had the blue trait, they'd be blue. Since they are white, they must not carry the trait. You should use the center stripe color as the color contributed in the pollen.

If the center stripe is weakly defined or narrow, the stamens might be made from both tissue types. The pollen could carry the color traits of either the stripe or the edges in this case. This would make predicting the outcome of the cross more difficult because you essentially have two different genetic parents making up the pollen. I'd expect the offspring in this case to show more variability than usual.

Strive for the A+ Part II

Bev Promersberger
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The following is the continuation and conclusion of Part I of the 'Affiliate Column' published in the January 2004 issue of the magazine. The subject is principles on achieving an A+ performance. The first three principles were discussed in the January issue. The final three principles follow:

4. Follow through

Don't start the job and leave others to do the rest. Finish the job completely.

5. Don't assume, check

It is easy to assume that people will do their job, but it's not always that simple. People do not always know what has to be done and when. People are often pushed into accepting a job that they do not have the experience or understanding to do. Rather than to ask for help, they often wait until too late or disappear at the time the result is expected. A little more time spent in explanation up front and checking on periodic progress can be very helpful. Also, don't assume that someone will do a job just because he/she has done it in the past!

6. Go the extra mile

Don't just do the job. Don't just complete it. Don't be an average C. Do more than what's expected. Do your best, not just enough to get by. Not everyone may know the difference, but you will!

Your goal should be to make more of a job than it was when you accepted the responsibility. I don't mean to change the requirements. But, add to them, make the job better than before. You should be pleased to do a job the best that you can do. I would like to challenge a member from each club, who did your job by reading this column, to not assume that every member in your club read it and follow through, suggesting that each member in your club read it. I challenge you to go the extra mile.

Thinking Small

Pat Richards
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Today we're going to discuss something near and dear to everyone's hearts: spring cleaning! I might also add, lest you be disappointed, you needn't, and actually shouldn't confine these practices to spring. Many should be done year round!

Daily Tasks

Monitoring your plants on a daily basis is always a good idea. You can spot plants which are showing signs of wilt and are in need of water. Did you know when a plant is in bloom, particularly full bloom, it needs much more water to support those blooms?

The first signs of mildew can also be detected, and immediate steps to prevent or treat can be started. Spilled pollen from a bloom can indicate thrips, and again, if caught early can be treated easily before an infestation begins.

More to the point, fading blooms can be removed as soon as the first signs of aging are detected. This will help steer essential nutrients and water to vital blooms, but will also prevent diseases from infecting your plants. You can pinch the blooms with your fingernails, or you can be more neat and precise and use fingernail or cuticle scissors. It is important to sanitize utensils as you move from plant to plant so as not to spread unwanted diseases. Dipping them in alcohol or a 10% chlorox/water mixture is most prudent. Properly disposing of the removed blossoms also helps, as they contain so much water they will mold quickly. By the time you have one or two blossoms remaining on a bloom stem, it has probably become unsightly with faded blossoms and bare stems, so the entire stem should be removed. If your fingers are very nimble, you can snap the entire stem from the plant's axil. If not, use a sharp knife or pencil point to snap it out. Every effort should be made to remove the stem cleanly, again, to prevent damaged areas from introducing disease, and to keep the leaf petioles growing straight and undamaged. If the stem has become soft and limp, remove it as cleanly as possible.

Tasks to Perform Every Watering

Every time you water, you should be examining the plant as a whole. Check for bloom stems which are trapped underneath the foliage, trying to gently part and move leaves so the blossoms can clear the foliage. If you're trying to force blooms for a special event, check for forming bloom stems. To properly time blooming and assure the most beautiful plant possible, remove the entire bloom stem when you're months away from the deadline (**Destem**). This will force all the plant's energy into building beautiful foliage. **Disbud** if you're more than 6-10 weeks from the deadline depending on bloom/plant type and how quickly you anticipate the plant will come into bloom. Disbudding is removing all but a 1/4" stub from the bloom stem, as some varieties will throw more than one bloom stem from the same point. **Debloom** if you're less than 6-10 weeks out, but more than 2-3 weeks before show. This will ensure the blooms which form will be fresh at the time when needed, and very few will have to be removed when the plant is supposed to be at its peak!

Look for leaves which need to be removed to improve symmetry, either because they're damaged, the culture has changed, or the plant is simply maturing. Likewise, look for the buildup of fertilizer salts on the rim of the pot. You may need to put a temporary collar on until you can repot the plant, and it may be a good idea to set the plant in a special spot on the shelf so you don't forget it! For example, plants needing attention between watering are set nearest the edge of the shelf in my plant room.

Be sure to rotate the plants so their growth is even. Pay attention to what the foliage is telling you. If it's always leaning, it's one which should be grown directly under the lights. If your plants are growing "gappy" (you can see through the layer of leaves and petioles and soil are visible) your plants need more light. If they're growing VERY tight and their centers almost resemble cabbages, or they're showing signs of bleaching (the foliage yellows at the end of the day), it's possible they're getting too much light.

Finally, examine wicks and roots! A sure sign of the need to repot is an old, "fertilizer crusted" wick, and lots of "water roots" (those which grow out the bottom of the pot and down the wick). These are the ones you'd want to set in that special "I need attention!" spot.

Monthly Tasks

Check the reservoir and/or matting for signs of excessive build up of fertilizer salts and algae. In between waterings clean extra reservoirs so replace those in need of attention. Cut or have ready extra matting as necessary. Once matting and wicks become encrusted, their ability to absorb and transmit water and essential nutrients is greatly reduced. Check lights to make sure they're in good working condition. Watch for those with ends which are beginning to blacken. They'll need replacing soon! Also, keeping the dust off of bulbs and the reflectors helps the performance of the lights. Likewise, dust the fans in your growing area. Look over the shelving area to make sure the shelves are free from dust and debris as well.

Quarterly Tasks

Do you also know your plants love to take baths, and that dust on their foliage minimizes their ability to absorb light? They would benefit greatly from occasional bathing! What's even better is minis and semis are very easy to handle! I take a three-step approach: initial misting, rinsing, and drying. Your cleaning area should have a sink or a bucket for water run-off, a table, and a gently blowing fan, if possible. Have on hand paper towels or bathroom tissue, a small brush, possibly a straw, and two misters. Fill one mister with a mixture of very warm, almost hot water which has had a few drops of dishwashing liquid put into it (the dishwashing liquid is a "surfactant", which makes it easier for dust to be removed). This mister should be set to a fairly fine mist. The second should be filled with only warm, almost hot water, and should be set to a more direct, yet not damaging mist. It's best to clean plants which are not in bloom, or are just beginning to bloom. If they have blooms, you'll clean only the outer edge of the foliage which will make their presentation all the prettier!

Bring several plants into the area. Begin by misting about three at a time. Try to avoid saturating the center of the plant. Select one plant and hold it at an angle over the sink or the bucket. Take the second mister and rinse the foliage, again trying to get minimal water in the center. As you spray, rotate the plant so the runoff goes to the outer edge of the plant, not to the center. Note: by having more direct spray you can do a better job of removing bits of soil from the petioles and leaf blades. Use the brush and/or straw (to direct strong puffs of air) to remove stubborn particles. Set the plant down, and using the tissue, blot any large drops of water from the center of the plant or the foliage. It is not necessary to dry the entire plant! When you're finished with all the plants in that grouping, return them to your growing area (Yes, they can be returned directly!)

Annual Tasks

Your growing area should receive a good cleaning once a year. If possible, wipe down shelves and walls with a disinfectant or a chlorox/water solution. Make sure all light bulbs are changed at least once a year (for set-ups with two lights, it's easiest to remember "Spring Forward, Fall Back" to remind you which bulb to change.) Another good practice is to look over your collection once a year and evaluate those cultivars which are not performing up to your standards. It's the same as cleaning house! By giving you a fresh start, you'll have a more positive approach to your collection and a renewed sense of excitement and enthusiasm.

Next Time

The July issue will feature the convention write up, featuring all the winners and fantastic entries in the Tucson convention. It's always an exciting article to research and to write! Take care!

AVSA Booster Fund

Shirley Berger • 4343 Schumacher Rd-196E • Sebring, FL 33872

CONTRIBUTIONS: December 1, 2003 - January 31, 2004

George H. Stewart, Universal City, TX. . . $5.00
Gwen Susan Wong, Hayward, CA 10.00
Orange County, AVS, Anaheim, CA . . . 100.00
Margie Scott, Richmond, VA 5.00
Bill Meier, Saint Charles, IL. 5.00
Jack Record, North Bay, NY 10.00
Victoria J. Hartmann, San Mateo, CA 3.00
Jane Sherman, Westport, CT. 5.00
Elizabeth Burke, New Providence, NJ 5.00

Sweetwater AVS, Bay Shore, NY. $15.00
AVS of Utah, West Jordan, UT 280.98
Affiliate is disbanding
Susan Storey, San Marcos, TX 20.00
In memory of Mel Garlick and Billie Golla
Uheng Khoo, Peoria, IL 25.00
In memory of sister Uchiak Khoo, AVSA life member since 1985
Elizabeth Warren, Cambridge, MA 25.00

A. Faye Wiginton, Marion, AR. $5.00
Central Jersey AVS, Milltown, NJ. 20.00
In memory of Charlotte Lynn, charter member and dear friend
Elise M. Balcom, Virginia Beach, VA. . . . 20.00
Bonnie Journell, Greencastle, IN 5.00
AVS of South Bay, Redwood City, CA . . . 25.00

TOTAL: $588.98

Registration Report

Janice Bruns
1220 Stratford Lane
Hanover Park, IL 60133
email: janice@qwip.net

A name reservation costs $1.00 and is valid for two years, after which time it may be extended two years for an additional $1.00. Registration of the plant is $5.00 unless completed within the reservation period, in which case the balance is then $4.00. Please make check payable to AVSA.

*****

Robert Kurzynski – Clifton, NJ

***Dream Runner** (9299) 12/19/03 (R. Kurzynski) Single dark purple sticktite pansy. **Variegated** dark green and white, plain, pointed/red back. **Miniature**

***Jazz Baby** (9300) 12/19/03 (R. Kurzynski) Single coral pink sticktite pansy. **Variegated** light-medium green and white, plain, serrated. **Miniature**

*****

Dolores Harrington – Fridley, MN

***Amy Lynn** (9301) 1/9/04 (D. Harrington) Single pink/wine sparkle edge. Medium-dark green, heart-shaped, quilted/red back. **Standard**

***Dolores' Chantilly Lace** (9302) 1/9/04 (D. Harrington) Single-semidouble pink pansy/wine top petals, wine fantasy band, thin green-white edge. Medium-dark green, heart-shaped, quilted, hairy, scalloped/red back. **Standard**

***Dolores' Sugar Candy** (9303) 1/9/04 (D. Harrington) Single-semidouble dark pink pansy/purple eye, green edge. Medium green, heart-shaped, quilted/red back. **Miniature**

***Echo's Nancy** (9304) 1/9/04 (D. Harrington) Double dark blue ruffled pansy. **Variegated** medium green and cream, heart-shaped, serrated. **Standard**

NAME RESERVATIONS

Sherlene Jones – Wolf Lake, IL

* Wizard's Sinister Urge * Wizard's Zimmy

*****

Olive Ma Robinson – Naples, NY

* Ma's Arctic Chill * Ma's Bridal Bouquet * Ma's Chin Dynasty * Ma's Frozen Moment * Ma's Fruit Smoothie * Ma's Glass Slipper * Ma's Grinning Grape * Ma's Lily Pad * Ma's Prince Froggie * Ma's Show Girl * Ma's Stewed Tomato * Ma's Taffy Swirl

Boyce Edens Research Fund

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Donations received from December 1, 2003 - January 31, 2004

Uheng Khoo, Peoria, IL. $25.00
In memory of Uchiak Khoo a dedicated life member of AVSA since 1985

The Tidewater AVS, Portsmouth, VA. 25.00
In lieu of a judges fee to Mary Boland

Betty E. Curry, Rivervale, NJ 5.00

Mark C. Bander, Dewitt, MI. 50.00

Marcia G. Kilpatrick, Hampton, CT. 25.00
In memory of Jean Keefe

Sweet Water AVS, Bay Shore, NY 15.00

Sweet Water AVS, Bay Shore, NY 50.00
In lieu of a speakers fee to Beryl Woods

Tristate African Violet Council, Lafayette, NJ 25.00
In memory of Charlotte Lynn, a long time member of our Council

The African Violet Society of South Bay, Redwood City, CA . . . $25.00

A. Faye Wiginton, Marion, AR 5.00

Elise M. Balcom, Virginia Beach, VA 10.00

R. David Harley, Urbana, IL 10.00

Bobbie Journell, Greencastle, NJ 5.00

Metropolitan Regional Council of AV Judges, East Northport, NY . . . 1.00

Metropolitan St. Louis AV Council, Ballwin, MO 10.00
Thanks to Jeff Smith for the material on Saintpaulia species that he sent to our program chairman Dr. Lillian Banchik. A special thank you from the Metropolitan Regional Council of African Violet Judges.

Ethel Spurlin, Mililani, HI 5.00

John B. Warren, Newburgh, NY. 10.00

"And the winners are ..."

Mary J. Corondan
7205 Dillon Court
Plano, TX 75024

AVS OF PHILADELPHIA, PA – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Ma's Soiree, Ma's Debutante, Wild Irish Rose; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Sugar Bear Blues, Rob's Fiddle Faddle, Von's Baby Jay; Best Miniature: Rob's Smarty Pants; Best Trailer: Rob's Wagga Wagga; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Marianne Gershon.** Best in Show/Best Standard: Splendiferous; Best Semiminiature: Irish Flirt, **Betty Branson.** Best Species: *Saintpaulia diplotricha* Parker, **Margaret Cass.** Best Gesneriad: *Episcia* 'Pink Dreams', **Judi Criswell.** Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Judith Smith.**

MID-ATLANTIC AVS, NC – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Ma's Corsage, Frozen in Time, Berry Splash, **Olive Ma Robinson.** 2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection: Aca's Wewonchu, Optimara EverHarmony, Wisteria, **Libbie Glembocki.** Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Fiddle Faddle, Rob's Fuzzy Navel, Rob's Fuddy Duddy, **Ralph Robinson.** 2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Optimara Little Pawnee, Rob's Antique Rose, Ness' Crinkle Blue; Best Trailer: Fairy Fountains, **Roxanne Shrewsberry.** Best in Show/Best Standard: Pretty Miss Kelly, Best Semiminiature: Ness' Satin Rose; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Roger Peeler.** Best Miniature: Planet Kid; Best Gesneriad: *Aeschynanthus humilis*, **Doris Brownlie.** Best Species: *Saintpaulia ionantha*, **Elizabeth Whitesides.** Best Design, **Brenda Nyce.** Design Sweepstakes, **Tom Glembocki.**

Violets: Principle of Three or One-third

by Marie Montague

It's become apparent to me that the number three or one-third keeps coming up in the growing of African violets. It's "spooky."

Just Consider:

- Three new leaves appear at the center of single crowned plants, and three baby leaves are removed from the bottom of a plant.
- When repotting, it is recommended that the pot size be one-third the size of the plant.
- 12" Standards (12 divided by 3) = 4" pot 8"
- Semi-minis (8 divided by 3) = 2 1/2" pot
- Trailers cannot be entered to show unless there are three crowns from one center.
- A good fertilizing program consists of using fertilizer three times and plain water the fourth time. The length of time between watering depends on your plants – water when dry.
- All collection classes in the show schedule require three different registered plant varieties of a type of African violet, standards, semis, minis, or trailers.
- And, more personally,
- My light stands are usually on 8 hours per day or one-third of a day.
- One-third of my violet collection is large plants, one third smaller plants of the same variety, and one third in set leaves.
- One-quarter tsp. fertilizer is usually recommended per gallon of water. Since I've never leveled the one quarter tsp., I suspect I've been using one-third tsp.
- When I repot large plants one-third of soil goes in the bottom of pot, one-third in the middle for roots, and one-third to fill in the top up to the rim.
- This became really, really "spooky" when I read a comprehensive article in Ye Bay Stater (January 2003) on design. The author suggested that "once you have finished your design, go back and remove at least one-third of the material." The kicker, which raised the hair on my neck, was when she suggested "violets be placed in the middle third of the niche, and that material extend into the top one-third of the area."

From Ye Bay Stater,
publication of the Bay State AVS

THOSE DREADFUL FUNGUS GNATS

by Nancy Robitaille

Of all the insects that infest our African violets, the most common is the fungus gnat. Bothersome, annoying, embarrassing when guests visit, these creatures may be obnoxious, but they are not too destructive to our plants.

Some say they do not bother the plant; they feed on fungus in the soil. But through research it has been discovered that yes, they do damage plants – food crops outdoors can be devastated by them. But, generally speaking, they are not too harmful to our African violets.

If there is no fungus matter available for them to eat, gnats will attack weaker and younger plants. Leaf cuttings, baby plants, and immature plantlets are vulnerable.

These "insignificant" pests are only a nuisance unless their numbers build and a hardy infestation takes over. If more than once you have seen a fungus gnat flying even with those yellow sticky cards set up among your plants, you have an infestation that should be taken care of.

These small flies include 600 species found in North America. Thank heaven most are not interested in our violets. Dr. Charles Cole, author of INSECT AND MITE PESTS OF AFRICAN VIOLETS, says: "Only a few species will actually feed on and damage live plant tissue."

Fungus gnats (orfelia spp.) lay eggs in the soil. With each female laying between 100-300 eggs and when those eggs hatch in four to six days, depending on the temperature of the room, it is easy to see how they could multiply into a serious infestation, though they are not extremely harmful to our plants.

What do these tiny annoying insects look like, and how can you tell them apart from thrips?

Thrips are tiny insects shaped like a bomb. They are in the range of 0.5-5 mm long. Color may be yellow, tan, brown, or black. Thrips have four narrow wings fringed with long hairs. They feed on decayed plant material or fungi or in the case of other species, they feed on other insects such as mites, plant-feeding thrips, and other small insects. Some thrips species feed on pollen, flowers, or plant foliage. Besides the color difference between thrips and gnats, their feeding habits are remarkable.

Gnats may be one-eighth to one-half inches in length, mosquito-like with long legs and antennae. Two wings of a grayish color are delicate and a clear color with a Y-shaped vein in the wing pattern. Fungus gnats may be gray or black, and some are marked with yellow or white.

As larvae, the insects are tiny, translucent-to-white in color with a distinctive shiny black head capsule. They have no legs and are small and thin, thread-like. They may be up to one quarter inch (5.5mm).

Larvae are most damaging to seedlings, cuttings, and young plants. When larvae feed on tender young roots, this provides an entry for pathogens.

Where there is an abundance of moist organic matter, adults will breed. They feed on plant exudations and nectar, while the baby larvae feed on fungi and decaying organic matter.

Many fungus gnats are found outdoors and in nurseries where it is warm and moist.

They may be attracted to light and may be seen near widows.

What damage can fungus gnats do? Damage is not visible: that is, damage to the foliage and flowers is negligible, but what about the tiny, delicate, often weak root systems of cuttings and baby plants? Roots may become small and show brownish scars from larval feeding. Especially delectable are the young feeder roots or root hairs that will become demolished in time. Plants may show signs of sudden wilting, loss of vigor, poor growth, yellowing, and foliage lost because of stress of root damage.

Fungus gnats may find their way into your plant room through air currents or other means such as on pet fur or even on your own hair or clothing. Other means of entry might be newly acquired plants.

The life cycle egg to adult is 3-4 weeks, depending upon the temperature of the room. Larvae are laid in cracks and crevices of the soil and will mature in four to six days.

Mixes that use coconut coir were at first thought to discourage gnats, but experiments have proven the contrary: it seems to attract gnats.

How to control Fungus gnats:

Poor drainage and over watering may contribute to making the conditions which fungus gnats love. Correction of this may reduce some of the problems.

When chemical control is necessary, you may decide to try the following suggestions.

"Black flies that flit around the plants are fungus gnats that breed in the rich organic planter mix. If manure is used in the planter mix these pests are sure to be troublesome," says the book, AFRICAN VIOLETS, published by Countryside Books.

The book goes on to say that although these tiny insects don't really do much damage, you may wish to control heavy infestations by drenching the soil mix with Sevin or chlordane solution.

An article written by Michael J. Kartuz from HANDBOOK ON AFRICAN VIOLETS AND THEIR RELATIVES (Brooklyn Botanic Garden) gives only slight mention on the subject of Fungus gnats. He offers a cure with chlordane or Cygon 2E (dimethoate) or use aldrin 5 percent granular.

Tony Clements in AFRICAN VIOLETS says to remove the top three-quarter inch of soil and replace it with fresh soil; then allow the plant to dry out before watering again.

Note that larvae may also be found at the bottom of the container.

Helen Van Pelt Wilson says in her book, AFRICAN VIOLET BOOK p. 213, that the larvae stage attacks root hairs. She recommends Fumi-Soil Capsules or Science Granular Systemic. She mentions to spray the plant with Raid House and Garden Bug Killer or use Terraclor or P-40.

Pauline Bartholomew in her book GROWING TO SHOW, says to use No Pest Strips. She says to tap on the pot to call them out then zap them with a pesticide spray. "If this is done each day for ten days or so the population will be greatly reduced if not eliminated entirely."

Montague Free has this to say in his book ALL ABOUT AFRICAN VIOLETS: "For a home remedy, take plant, pot, and saucer to kitchen sink, water thoroughly with a fine spray of lukewarm water, and when the springtails swarm in the saucer, wash them down the drain. ...Another is to put a teaspoonful of naphthalene flakes in the center of the saucer, rest the pot on it, and then fill the saucer with water; but it seems to me that this might be disastrous to plants in some cases. Other prescriptions include these three: watering with one teaspoon Chlorox to one pint of warm water; with one teaspoon ammonia to one quart of water; or with one teaspoon Lysol to one quart of water..."

Other ways to rid ourselves of these pests:

The most practical solution is recommended by Pauline Bartholomew. She recommends using No-Pest strips manufactured by several companies. These yellow (or blue) cards are manufactured with a sticky substance which makes flying insects stick. These are most effective when placed just above the soil level.

Some growers have used yellow cards or tennis balls coated with Vaseline for the same purpose. One recommended using the product Tanglefoot on yellow cards since it lasts much longer than the Vaseline.

An internet article written by University of Connecticut staff has this to say about fungus gnats. The article is entitled INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT.

"A bacteria called Bacilleis thuringensis var. israelensis, sold under the name of Gnatrol, is most effective against the young larvae when they are actively feeding. The bacteria must be ingested by the larva, after which a toxic protein crystal is released into the insects' gut. The larva stops feeding and dies. Gnatrol is only toxic to larvae for two days. Repeat applications...

Steinernema filtiae is an insect killing nematode that can be also applied as a drench treatment".

Another predatory mite mentioned is Hypoasper miles, that feeds on fungus gnat larvae.

"Knox Out and DuraGuard ME are two microencapsulated products that may be used for both larvae and adults." Other recommendations are: Talstar, Atain™, Decathlon 20 WP, Astro, Orthene TR, Pyrethrum, and insecticidal soap which are labeled for fungus gnat adults.

The University of Connecticut article continues by suggesting this: "Potato plugs, one inch diameter, one-half inch thick placed on soil surface to monitor for larvae"... may be used. "To use a potato plug, place it so there is contact with the soil so the plug does not dry out. First check soil under the plug, then the surface of the potato. It may take one to three days before seeing larvae. Replace plugs weekly. Remember to remove the potato plugs."

FUNGUS GNAT DEVELOPMENT AT 72 DEGREES FAHRENHEIT

Development Stage	Number of Days
Egg	4-6 days
Larva	10-14 days
Pupa	4-6 days
Adult	8-10 days
Egg Laying Period	7 days
Egg to Adult	30 days
Total number of eggs laid	100 to 150

REGISTRATION OF AFRICAN VIOLETS

Only named African violets can be exhibited in AVSA shows, and only registered varieties can be entered for the AVSA Collection Awards.

To be eligible for registration an African violet cultivar, produced originally either as a mutant or from seed, must be propagated vegetatively through three generations. If the new plants remain true to the original plant for that long it is assumed that the plants will continue to reproduce true.

Registration information includes the name of the plant, the hybridizer, and other facts that identify the plant. For more information on registration of African violets write the African Violet Plant Registration Chairman Janice Bruns, 1220 Stratford Lane, Hanover Park, IL 61033. *Email*: janice@quip.net

AFRICAN VIOLET TERMS

by Dorothy Kosowsky

ANTHER: One or more sacks which contain the pollen.

AXIL: The angle formed at the juncture of the petiole and the main stem.

BLOOM STALK: Peduncle, pedicel, petal, etc.

PEDUNCLE: Located near the crown of the plant, the peduncles develop between the leaves bearing the flower clusters. It is the stalk that supports a flower cluster.

PEDICEL: The stem that supports the buds or blossoms in a bloom cluster.

PETAL: The individual segments of a bloom.

BELL: Single blossoms with a bell shape.

CHIMERA: Blossoms with stripes that radiate from the center, pinwheel.

DOUBLE: Blossoms with at least two layers of petals.

FANTASY: Blossoms are splotched, streaked, or rayed with contrasting color or deeper shade of the same color. The blossoms can be of any kind or shape.

FRILLED: Blossoms have heavily serrated or frilled outer lobes. The blossoms can be any kind or shape.

EDGED: Blossoms can be any shape. Lobes of the blossoms are edged with any color.

Geneva or Geneva edged: Lobes of the blossoms are edged with white.

MULTICOLOR: Blossoms with two or more colors.

SEMIDOUBLE: Blossoms that possess more than the standard five lobes, such as those blossoms with a crest or tuft at the center, but less than a full second row of petals.

SINGLE: Blossoms have five lobes, appear single, with two upper lobes that are usually smaller than the three lower ones.

STAR: Blossoms have five lobes of about equal size and distance from one another. The blossoms can be single, semi-double, or double.

TWO-TONE: Blossoms having two or more shades of one color.

WASP: Blossoms are single and each lobe is very narrow.

CALYX: The cup-like base of a blossom. This external part is usually green in contrast to the inner showy portion composed of colored petals.

PETIOLE: The stem which attaches the leaf to the main stem.

PISTIL: This is the seed-bearing female portion of the flower and consists of ovaries, style, and stigma.

POLLEN: The fertile yellow powder, released from the anther.

SEPAL: Individual segments, similar to petals, covering the bloom, part of the calyx.

STAMEN: A stalk or filament bearing an anther at its tip to hold the pollen.

STIGMA: A sticky receptive surface to which pollen adheres.

STYLE: This elevates the stigma into a favorable position for pollen collection.

OVARY: At the base of the pistil in which the seed develops.

FOLIAGE TYPES: Besides color the shapes of the leaves are also distinctive.

Compound, Wasp, Bustle, or Piggyback: Leaves are compound with one large and two smaller lobes.

Girl: Deeply scalloped leaves, usually rounded or heart-shaped with white to yellow marking at the base of each leaf.

Holly: Heavily crested leaves with the leaf edges curled forward or bent back with exaggerated wavy edges resembling holly in form.

Longifolia or Spider: Narrow pointed strap-like leaves with either plain or wavy edges.

Plain or Tailored: Plain in texture and form; it is sometimes known as standard or boy foliage.

Pointed: Ends of the leaves come to a definite point.

Quilted: Leaves have distinct raised areas between the veins. Some leaves have pie-crust edging.

Ruffled, Frilled, Wavy, or Fluted: Leaves have serrated or ragged edges.

Spooned, Ovate, Cupped-up: Leaves are concave with high edges like a spoon.

Supreme: Leaves are thick, hairy, and quilted with strong pencil-like petioles.

VARIEGATED FOLIAGE:

Variegated: Leaves (in addition to shades of green) can be marked with white, cream, light yellow, or rosy shades from light pink to a deep wine red. This defines all variegation other than Crown or Mosaic variegation

Crown Variegation: Formerly called Champion variegation. This variegation is usually restricted to the center or crown of the plant and turns green as it progresses to the outer layers of the foliage.

Mosaic Variegation: Formerly called Lillian Jarrett variegation. It is a mosaic pattern over the whole leaf.

Tommie Lou Variegation: This was one of the first and most distinctive types, occurring primarily on the edge of the leaf and is now referred to as just variegated.

AVSA: African Violet Society of America

AFRICAN VIOLET MAGAZINE: Also referred to as AVM

MASTER LIST: The AVML is a series of volumes listing all registered and many non-registered varieties.

AVSA HANDBOOK FOR JUDGES & EXHIBITORS: This handbook contains the rules and regulations for African violet shows, judges, judging, plus other valuable information for exhibitors.

ACID SOIL: Soil that has a pH of less than 7.0.

ALKALINE SOIL: Soil that has a pH greater than 7.0.

ARTIFICIAL LIGHT: Light other than that provided by the sun.

CAPILLARY ACTION: The movement of water upward either by a wick or matting in contact with the plant container.

CHLOROPHYLL: The green pigment found in the chloroplasts, necessary in the absorption of light for use in photosynthesis.

CHROMOSOME: Microscopic, rod-like structure composed of individual units (genes) which pass on the plant's characteristics.

CONDITION: The cultural appearance of an exhibit at the time of judging.

CROWN: The head of the plant above the soil line. African violets are described as having single or multiple crowns.

CULTIVAR: A plant altered from the species through cultivation by man, either through hybridizing or mutation. Through common usage, the word "cultivar" and "variety" are interchangeable.

DISBUDDING: Removal of the flower buds or bud stems in order to delay blooming for a later time.

DIVISION: The cutting or gently pulling apart of a plant having two or more crowns.

DOUBLE POTTING: The placement of a plant, still in its smaller pot, within a larger pot with the space between the two pots filled with soil mix.

SLIP POTTING: Placing a plant into a clean pot of the same size to hide any disfigurement or dirt on the pot.

DRENCH: To wet to the point of saturation.

FERTILIZER: An enriching material used in soil (or soilless mix) to increase its productivity.

MAJOR FERTILIZER ELEMENTS: Nitrogen, Phosphorous, Potassium.

SECONDARY ELEMENTS: Sulfur, Calcium, and Magnesium.

FLARED-TOP POT: A pot designed with an extended lip that serves as an additional support to the foliage.

FLORIFEROUSNESS: The quantity of bloom on a plant.

FOLIAGE: The leaves of a plant collectively.

HUMIDITY: The ratio of water vapor held in the air, beneficial to plant growth.

HYBRID: A plant grown from seed as a result of breeding or cross-pollinating.

HYBRIDIZATION: Using the pollen from one African violet and transferring it to the stigma of another violet to obtain seed.

HYBRIDIZER: One who breeds or cross-pollinates plants.

LEACH: To pour a quantity of plain water through the soil of a plant to flush away accumulated fertilizer salts and neutralize alkali build-up.

LEAF CUTTING: A leaf, plus a portion of the petiole, cut from a plant and used for propagating purposes.

MUTANT OR SPORT: Plants that have developed new features not seen in the parent plant. This can occur naturally or be chemically induced.

NECK: A plant that has lost leaves from the lower portion of the plant exposing the main stalk above the potting mixture.

PASTEURIZE: To raise the temperature of the soil or potting mix (or one of the components thereof) to 180 degrees F. and maintain that temperature for 30 minutes.

PATHOGEN: Any agent that causes disease; a virus or a microorganism such as a bacterium or fungus.

PHOTOSYNTHESIS: The production of food in plants through a complex chemical reaction involving light, water, and carbon dioxide.

PROGENY: The offspring of any type of cross.

PLANTLET: An immature plant; either still on the "mother" leaf or potted individually.

PLANT TYPES: Miniature, Semiminiature, Single-crown, Standard, and Trailer.

PROPAGATE: to produce, or cause to produce, new plants.

ROOTED CLUMP: A term used by commercial growers referring to a group of plantlets attached to the leaf cutting(mother leaf).

ROSETTE: A cluster of leaves radiating symmetrically from a central stem.

SEEDLING: A plant grown from seed.

SPECIES; A subdivision of the genus *Gesneriaceae*, i.e. *Saintpaulia.*

SPHAGNUM MOSS: A long-fibered moss in a less decomposed state than that of sphagnum peat moss. It is often used in its natural, unmilled state as a growing medium for plants in hanging baskets.

STARTER PLANTS: Immature plants in small pots (usually 2 1/2") are sometimes referred to as "starter plants" by commercial growers.

STEM: The main stalk or trunk of a plant.

SUCKER: The beginning of a new plant which forms near the base of a plant or in the lower axils.

SYSTEMIC: A chemical substance which, when absorbed by plant tissue, causes the tissue to be poisonous to certain pests and diseases. Soil drenching is the usual method of induction.

SYMMETRY: The degree of perfect duplication and overlapping of the foliage evenly spaced around the main stem of the plant. Straight petioles with each layer of leaves progressively larger than the preceding layer.

TISSUE CULTURE: Test tube propagation using a culture medium and producing hundreds of plants from a minute piece of plant tissue.

VERMICULITE: A sterile, lightweight, brownish, soft-textured, pebbly material. It is manufactured from crushed mica ore expanded to many times its original size through intense heat.

WETTING AGENT: A solution that is mixed with water to reduce the surface tension that causes water to bead.

WICKING: Any material used to draw water from a reservoir into the soil of a potted plant.

How Do Plants Grow?

by Sue Gardner

Have you ever seen a plant which stays the same: no flowers, no new leaves, no change in size? What usually happens to it? The owner usually pulls it out in disgust! How do plants grow, and what do we need to do to encourage growth and flowering?

Let's look at plant structure and growth points.

Plants consist of stems, roots, leaves, flowers, and seeds. Where does the growth take place? Growth occurs in certain localized regions called growing points (meristems) in roots, shoots, and flower buds. The main meristems are in the shoot at the apex of the stem and in the tip of the principal root. The root meristem is protected by a root cap.

If we understand how plants grow, we can provide what is needed and optimize our plants' growth.

Food produced by plants is the most necessary requirement for growth.

Leaves manufacture sugars (food), which is transported to where it is needed for maintenance and growth. In all plants (including African violets), if there is no food produced, there is no growth and no flowers.

Plants with stunted shoot systems will usually have stunted roots as well because they are starved of food.

What happens if excess food is produced by the plant? It is stored as starch in cells throughout the plant and used when needed. One time where this is useful is when cuttings are placed in potting mix. An African violet leaf or side-shoot will only produce roots and plantlets if it contains a reserve of stored food. That is why a leaf from a sick plant will not root easily.

What do we learn from this? We need to provide optimum conditions for food production i.e. light, fertilizer, and temperature.

1. Fertilizer

The plant produces sugars from carbon dioxide in the air, light energy, and water supplied by the grower. But for stem, leaf, and flower tissues to be formed, other elements are needed. These are supplied from the soil or by fertilizing, absorbed through the roots, and transported to where they can be used. If no nutrients are available, no growth occurs. That is why we use a fertilizer with a good balance of nutrients.

2. Light

The leaves of a plant are usually arranged to catch the most light. African violets with leaves in a flat whorl demonstrate this as they can utilize light from above and from the side. How does light help growth? Light causes the stomata (pores) in leaves to open allowing carbon dioxide to enter and be used in food production by the process of photosynthesis. (The three things used in photosynthesis are light energy, carbon dioxide, and water.) Water escapes through the pores, so more water must be supplied to the plant or the process cannot continue. The food produced can then be used in growth. Plants grown in the dark are weak and spindly with no healthy growth. Light and dark periods are essential for formation of flower buds and growth of flowers.

3. Temperature

Air temperature of 65°- 75° is ideal for healthy growth in African violets. It has also been found that the temperature of roots (i.e. soil or potting mix) affects growth of plants. Tropical plants don't grow (or very little) below 12-16°C. Over 80° kills roots of many plants. African violets do not grow well when the temperature of the roots is below 60° or above 75°.

Other Factors Controlling Growth

If water, nutrients, and light are supplied in adequate quantities, what else controls growth?

Hormones manufactured by the plant do this. Indole acetic acid (IAA) is produced in the shoot and gradually moves downward through the plant. It stimulates the growth of the apical shoot and retards lateral shoot (sideshoot) growth. In very low concentrations, it stimulates the formation of adventitious roots. These are roots which grow from stem tissue or cuttings, not other roots. A hint when putting down leaves is not to use hormone on the cut surface, as although it will stimulate new roots, shoot growth will be retarded. The leaf itself contains enough IAA to produce roots. However, when putting down a crown cutting, rooting hormone is helpful as a shoot is already present in the crown and roots from the bare stem develop more quickly.

Growth of flowers is stimulated by a hormone called phytochrome which responds to certain light and dark periods sending chemical messages to axillary buds to change from sideshoots to flower buds. In some plants, this only takes place at certain temperatures.

What does all this mean for us? We need to supply fertilizer, water, the best temperature and light, and let the plant do the rest! However, be careful in the use of hormones.

From the Newsletter of the Early Morn AVS, Australia and New Zealand

Propagating the Show Plant

by Dorothy Kosowsky • Whittier, CA

Many times, we buy a plant which grows alright in our conditions, but it never becomes as outstanding a plant as the offspring of leaves started in our own environment. So, I'm offering my views on the importance of giving your plant the greatest opportunity to be a "Winner".

Creating a "Show Winner", as opposed to growing a nice plant, has many facets. One of these is the adapting of the African violet strain (genetic makeup) that you want to grow to your environment. Many violets seem to have very strong strains, as well as weak or mediocre tendencies. As an example, some strains of 'Precious Pink' bloom in profusion while others refuse to send up even one bloom stalk.

First, you need to have a leaf or a plantlet of a good producing plant. The other alternative is experimentation. I buy many new introductions to try in my collection, but the first thing I do when the plants are being repotted in my soil (all plants are repotted in my soil as soon as they come into the house), is to put down two or three leaves in starter mix (one-half perlite and one half vermiculite, with a handful of charcoal).

The leaf is cut at an angle, leaving about an inch of stem (petiole), depending on the leaf's size. If the leaf is very large, an inch and a half will anchor it better. If small, three quarters of an inch will be sufficient. Put at least three quarters of the stem in the mix.

The pots (I use Solo cups) are bottom watered with a 10 drops per gallon solution of Super Thrive, then placed in some type of covered container. Regular feedings of several types of fertilizers are used thereafter. A lone pot would be placed on a saucer and covered with a baggie. Many pots, such as when you return from a convention, would go into a tray with a clear dome and set in good light. You can also use two clear shoe boxes to make a high dome container. One box would have the smooth parts of plastic clothes pins affixed to the four sides of the box with 'crazy glue' to keep the upper box aligned when it covers the lower box. Just be sure that the 'pull lips' match on the top and bottom boxes.

Some of your plantlets will be up in a month; others will take three or four months, so do be patient and plan to do the 'potting on' over quite a period of time as the leaves sprout and produce their plantlets. I know that some of you pick up many leaves at "Leaf Bingo" from your affiliate, as well as at shows or conventions. With a few of the miniatures and semiminiatures, you can be separating the babies in two months. The standards do better if you wait until the new leaves are at least one half inch across.

I like to put standard babies in a Solo cup to start, and when they reach six inches across, I move them to a three inch squat pot. In both cases, I plant them Texas style, with one third of the pot filled with perlite and then potting soil to fill around the plantlet. When moving to the three inch pot, leave the soil root ball intact, but knock off the old perlite. At this point, the plants are growing quite rapidly and need turning every few days for symmetrical growth. Often, the plant will need a support ring even on the three inch pot.

With miniatures and semiminiatures, I use a two inch pot for the first transplanting and move on to two and one eighth inch pots for semiminiatures, still using the same ratio of perlite. The miniatures remain in the same size pot their whole lives, being dropped down in the pot, just as you would a large standard in a six inch pot when repotting.

All plants need inspection and turning often, removal of leaves that are smaller than those in the row above, and removal of suckers ASAP. In general, TLC produces good plants.

One last observation: the sibling plantlets started in your environment are not all of the same quality, so select the ones showing the best symmetry, vigorous growth, nicest variegation, and/or rich color. These will form the backbone of a well conditioned collection which will reward you with the best you can produce. This does take a great deal more time, but aren't winning plants worth it?

From the *California Council News*

Those Yellow Leaves

by Carolee Carter

From the AVSA Web Site "Frequently Asked Questions"

Leaves turn yellow for a number of reasons. The most common is when an older leaf turns yellow before the younger ones. This indicates a problem with insufficient nitrogen (the first mysterious number in the fertilizer formula). The plant is making an attempt to direct whatever nitrogen it receives to the new growth in the plant, leaving the older leaves without nutrients. If the new growth is yellowish, however, it could mean either the plant is receiving inadequate light, which you can easily adjust. If it is too little fertilizer, which you can change from an African violet fertilizer to a balanced 20-20-20 type that would deliver more nitrogen to the plant. Or, if the soil pH is too acid, you can repot the plant in fresh potting mix. Your plant is most comfortable in a mix that has a pH of between 6.5 and 7.0.

"Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary ...."

by Brenda Brasfield

We all know the next line to this poem, only in our case, it would read, "How do your violets grow?" I've been asked to tell you how I grow my violets. While I wish I had some innovative ideas for you, I'm sure I grow mine the way most of you do. I always look forward to seeing the project plants in our club's shows, because I'm always amazed to see how different they all look. Though we may all share similar procedures, our home environment, water, the brightness of our rooms, all make them uniquely our own.

All of my plants are grown in one room which they share with my sewing machine, exercise equipment, and desk space. All, however, is not that many. I have one standard three shelf stand, one converted baker's rack for my semis and minis that has five shelves with 24" fixtures and three 24" tabletop stands. Because of space, I'm very selective with the plants I grow, usually twenty standards and twenty to thirty semiminiature and miniature plants. I used to wish I could grow more, but truthfully, this is all I really have time to care for. I'm always growing to show, because I enter a spring and a fall show.

As far as lighting goes, I either use one cool white and one wide spectrum in each fixture or two wide spectrum tubes in each fixture, replacing one tube in each fixture each year before the spring show. Most standards are grown 10" from the top of the plant to the tubes, most semis and minis 6" from the top of the plants to the tubes. 'Optimara EverPraise' is grown under a 24" fixture 12" from the top of the plant. All lights are left on for thirteen hours.

All of my plants are wick watered individually. I like to let them dry out a little between waterings. I use 3/4 tsp of Dynagro to a gallon of water, along with 1/8 tsp. of physan 20, 1 drop of Superthrive, and 2 drops of Instachlor. This is used on variegated plants as well.

My potting mix consists of 2 quarts Volkmann's potting soil, 1 quart perlite, 1 quart vermiculite, 1/2 cup charcoal, and 1 T. ground dolomite limestone, which I pasteurize at 180° for one hour. Standards are repotted twice a year and semis and minis four times a year. Most all semis and minis are grown in 2 1/4" pots. By following Dr. Ralph Robinson's drastic repotting procedure, I've found that leaf size can be kept in check eventually on most plants. Most standards are kept in 4" pots. I add about 1/2" of perlite in the bottom of the pot. The roots seem to like it, and if I have to pot down a neck at show time, I just remove the perlite, which doesn't seem to be hard on the plant.

To grow for show, I basically follow Pauline Bartholomew's pre-show schedule in her book *Growing to Show* (now available through the AVSA office). I do disbud. In fact, I disbud all the time. I only let my plants bloom at show time. It's easier to keep good symmetry that way. It takes a lot of time and good nerves to ease a bloom stalk to the side of a leaf. I do not increase the light time at nine weeks. Four weeks before every show, I list each plant and how many open blooms there are. I compare that with the previous show's list. If there aren't enough, I will increase the light time an hour each remaining week. If this is a new plant, I make a note to disbud a week earlier next time. If too many blooms are open, I reduce the light time a couple of hours, which doesn't seem to harm the symmetry. The reduction of heat from just two hours can keep blooms a little fresher. I can also move them to a cooler part of the house with my table top stands.

While I must admit I didn't volunteer to write this article, I always enjoy reading other people's articles, and I would encourage you to submit an article on how you grow your plants. Sharing is a good thing!

From *The Dixie News*

Instant Nursery

Dampen several layers of a paper towel and place inside a clear bakery or deli take home box. Take your leaf and trim it for propagation and prop it up against the side of the box. Your leaf will root and the roots will spread into the paper towel. Keep the towel moist but not dripping wet and sit back and watch the roots and baby plants form. After babies form, water with a little diluted fertilizer water. When ready to pot, simply tear the paper towel apart along the root lines and pot up the babies. The magic of Mother Nature right before your eyes! Fun for kids to watch and a good project for schools and scout groups.

Moisten a sponge or piece of carpet padding and place in clear plastic bakery or deli boxes and place *Episcia* stolons on the sponge. Watch as the stolons produce roots and take hold and grow in your instant greenhouse. Transfer to solo cups with wicks and soil after roots form.

From the Victoria AVS Newsletter, Texas

Dividing Plantets

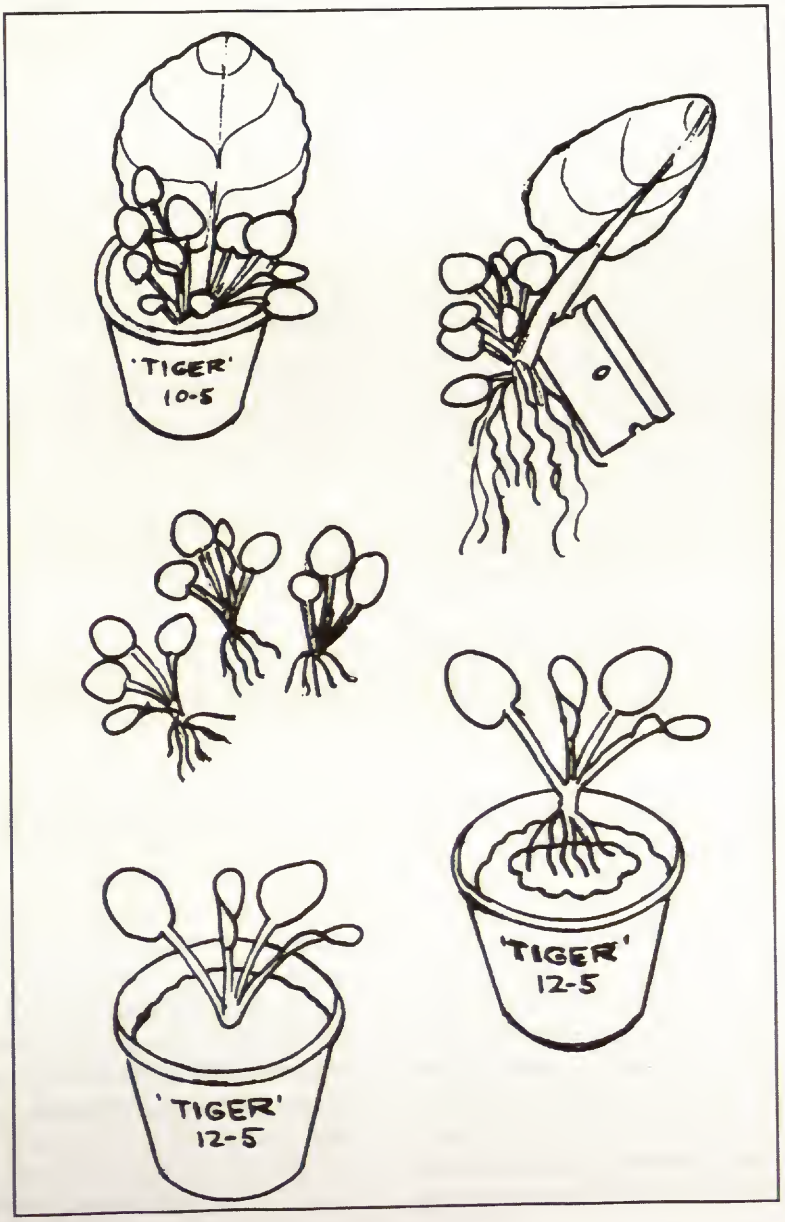
by Sheila Walton

After a few months, your young plants will be ready to be independent and go their own way. If you have been growing them in a plastic bag, they will need to become acclimated to the outside world. Once they are established, approximately one inch, open the bag for a few days and then remove the bag altogether. At this stage, your pot could be placed on a reservoir. When the plantlets are about one and one half inch tall, or larger if you prefer, they will be ready to go into their own individual small pots. Allow your plantlets to dry out. It is much easier to separate the roots, and you will do less damage if the potting mix is relatively dry and easily falls from the roots.

Remove the clump of plantlets from the pot. Carefully separate them by gently crumbling off the dry potting mix. You may have only one plantlet or many. There is no guarantee how many offspring you will have. You now need to look at each plantlet. Is it healthy? Can you see small growing leaves at its center? Has it got roots? Having chosen as many good plantlets as you want, discard the rest! Remove any leaves which are damaged, or the outer 'baby' leaves which are paler and rounder than the others; they have served their purpose and will not grow into anything more useful.

Your plantlet would generally need to have about six healthy leaves. If you are growing a variegated leaf variety, you will need to choose plantlets that have a good amount of green leaf. If the leaves are all white/yellow, they will not be able to grow well. The variegation will come as the plant grows. Now take a small pot, label it with the name of the plant and the date, insert a wick, some African violet potting mix, make a hole in the middle, and plant your young plantlet. Tap the pot on the bench to settle potting mix around the plant, but do not press down. The roots need room to grow and air to breathe. Plant each plantlet into its own small pot. If you get potting mix on the leaves, brush it off with a soft brush. Be especially careful to keep the center of the plantlet clean. The consequences of not cleaning the plantlet are the marking of leaves, or the rotting off of the center of the plant. If your plant is a bit wobbly, you can support it.

Toothpicks or hairpins can be useful, but they can also damage the young stems if left too long, so plastic is best. According to your growing conditions and your most successful method (if you're not sure experiment!), place the plantlet on a reservoir, allow to soak up some water before placing it on your light stand, OR you may prefer to place it in a plastic bag for a few days; if you do this, you will need to slightly dampen the potting mix first. Remember to use a small pot. African violets do not like a lot of wet mix around their roots. Your young plant has probably got very few roots, so it cannot use a lot of potting mix. When your plant is established, resume normal strength fertilizer in the reservoir.



From the Newsletter of the Early Morn AV Group, Australia and New Zealand

Humidity and Humility
(A tale of African Violets)

by Peggy Payne
Hallsville, MO

I have just emerged from several years with pitiful looking violets. I don't need to describe pitiful. Every long time grower of African Violets knows what I mean - scrawny plants with poor centers and no blooms. It happened gradually. I went from beautiful plants, full of bloom, to last year when I only had two plants at our spring show. I am a forty-year veteran of growing African violets, so it can happen to anyone. I made many mistakes. In retrospect, I can see what I did - inconsistency, switching from growing on individual reservoirs to growing on matting, always wicked, but going back and forth. Altering the pH with vinegar without testing and, of course, battles with insects and disease along the way.

If I had it to do again, I would throw away all plants in the beginning, sanitize my growing area, and start again. This is what I did in the end, only a little bit at a time.

The frustrating part was that my starter plants were beautiful. It was when I went to bigger plants in three - inch pots that the trouble began. I should have learned from that scenario that the problems were in my culture, not in the plants themselves.

Last year, I finally had no big plants left because I had pitched everything with any problem. That was all of the bigger plants, but I had all these beautiful starter plants, most of them in trays, wicked on matting, under plastic lids, or sheets of saran wrap. The light began to dawn. The problem had to be low humidity with low temperatures. Because natural gas has become so expensive, I had put space heaters on the lowest setting possible and kept it there. Of course, plants under cover were warmer and had higher humidity.

I stopped doctoring the water with vinegar, repotted all plants into fresh mix – I had stopped reporting regularly, had gotten to the point where I had to make myself take care of the plants. Typical burnout, which most growers experience from time to time. If your plants aren't doing well, you don't enjoy working with them. Then they suffer from neglect.

I finally realized that the advice I had been following wasn't necessarily right for me. My conditions were different. I finally took the step of putting all plants in trays, wicked onto matting. I put saran wrap over all of the trays. I did that last spring. And, no, my plants did not rot over the summer. I lost very few plants. When I took the trays down, I took off any off sized leaves, removed dead leaves, potted plants into correctly sized pots – no more pots with crusted brown deposits on them. Of course, if violets are repotted often, the soil nourishes them and the PH stays in balance. I fertilized when I watered. Occasionally, a pot dries out. I take it to the sink and water it thoroughly. The matting does dry out between times, so plants aren't continually soggy. This is a whole lot better for my plants, grown under very cool conditions.

By fall, I could see a huge difference. A 'Lavender Lace', which had twisted, gnarled leaves grew normally and now looks beautiful. By mid November, plants began to bloom and bloom and bloom. I have plants blooming that I've never seen bloom before on shelves where plants have never bloomed before. My species plants are outdoing themselves. I know some people would balk at having all their plants covered with plastic. But I change the saran wrap when it gets dusty. The blooms lift the wrap up as they develop, and I can view the plants through the clear wrap and admire them.

I've seen my first bloom on the standard trailer, 'Honeysuckle Rose'. The little scrunched up blooms on my other trailers are gone, and, no, I haven't had problems with mildew or fungus. Maybe it is because spores can't settle on the plants. The looseness of the plastic wrap assures adequate circulation. Of course I want to work on the plants. Who wouldn't? So they are also benefiting from extra care. I have gone even further and have the plant stands draped from all sides, but not the top, to keep drafts off. This house is cool, and where you wear wraps to keep warm, violets are not going to do well. Of course, with the lights on, it is warmer inside the plastic.

I have converted a friend to using plastic around her plant stands. She overdid it for a while by using clothespins to hold the plastic together. The temperature in the plant stand went up to eighty-two degrees, and her plants did not like it. She removed the clothespins, and her plants are doing much better, too.

I am convinced that humidity and temperature are critical to good plant growth, when those are the only variables. I have always grown under lights and used Optimara or Volkmann fertilizers, with Peters occasionally thrown in.

I have changed the humidity and have plenty of humility forced on me by my plants. At one time, I considered myself an expert with many blue ribbons. Going from showing one hundred plants to just having two to show will change that! I think I'll go admire 'Aly's Blizzard Bunny' or 'Ness' Crinkle Blue'. It has been a long time in coming!

The only problem is that it is going to be hard to disbud for show, and I may not do it. I may just take the chance that something will be in bloom at show time. I haven't had bloom in so long and am really enjoying it.

From *The Council News*,
publication of the Missouri Valley AV Council

SINNINGIA "BY THE YARD" Or *Sinningia tubiflora*

by Laura Walker

Over ten years ago, the members of the Atlanta Gesneriad Interest Group (AGIG) decided to order gesneriads which were either new to us, had been suggested as good examples of their type, or just sounded different and interesting. One of the plants I bought was *Sinningia tubiflora.*

I was new to growing the 'other gesneriads.' I planted the tuber. It grew fairly rapidly, and I decided that it needed to be to be closer to the light as it was getting tall and was not showing any sign of buds or anything that indicated it had reached mature height.

It rambled down the plant light, and I turned it across the end of the light fixture and headed it back down the light fixture. It did seem happier, as the intervals between the leaves had become shorter, but it did not bloom that summer. It went dormant that winter and sprouted the next spring. I repeated the above procedure and asked other AGIG members if they could suggest anything. I cut the growing tips, but the side branches became just as long. I began to call it *Sinningia* 'By the Yard'.

It faithfully sprouted each spring and went dormant each fall, but it never bloomed, and I could not get it to grow any shorter. The tuber had grown and was in a fairly large pot now. I tried to get information on the plant and had about decided that I would not find any. This is a good example of 'Never give up.' Fortunately, the plant didn't. At the Richmond DAVS convention, one of the seminars was on unusual (to me) Gesneriads, and the speaker had pictures that gave me my first clue! *It's a bush*??!!

After that, I found a small reference in a paragraph which said *Sinningia tubiflora* needs full sun in order to bloom. I would never have put any of my gesneriads in full sun, but I did put it in full sun last spring. It is now SHORT and bushy. It didn't bloom last year, but it has sprouted again this spring, and I have it on a screened porch waiting for really warm weather and its place in the sun.

I don't know, yet, if it needs a heavy fertilizer schedule to bloom or if "less is more." It may have to be older, although it seems that I have had that plant forever, to reach blooming age. Does it need a fairly cool winter dormant period or at least what would seem cool to us for gesneriads? The plant hasn't given up, and I won't. By the way, *Sinninia tubiflora* blooms are supposed to be fragrant, and that is why I chose the plant.

Wick Watering

by Joan Halford

From her book, *Growing African Violets in Southern Africa*

This is an excellent method of watering, one that is ideal when plants have to be left unattended for any length of time. The plant has a wick inserted into the soil at the time of potting, with the end hanging out of the bottom of the pot and into a reservoir. The wick can be made of strips of nylon stocking, polypropylene cord, or twisted nylon fishing cord. The thickness of the wick depends on the size of the plant. A frayed end of the nylon cord is in the root-ball, thus the plant receives a constant, even amount of moisture all the time. A clear plastic reservoir with a snap-on lid with two holes burnt or cut into the lid is ideal. One hole is made in the middle of the lid to allow the wick to pass through and go down into the water, and the other hole, to one side of the lid, facilitates topping up the water level in the reservoir.

With wick watering, there is no need to move the plant except for routine turning, which is something that must not be overlooked.

Soluble fertilizer can be used in the reservoir, but since this would constitute constant feeding, care should be taken to use at 1/8 strength. Always bear in mind that the water level in the reservoir should be at least 2" below the bottom of the soil in the pot. In this way, the moisture in the soil can be regulated by increasing or decreasing this distance. In a clear plastic container or reservoir, you will get a slight algae build-up, which necessitates cleaning and changing reservoirs from time to time. One can also group a large number of plants on a communal reservoir, so that all the wicks can lie in the water. Using this system, the plants will get the added benefit of more humidity, which they love.

Speaking Out About Violets

by Fred C. Hill

I have been fortunate this year to be invited to speak to four garden clubs in my area. It's a great opportunity to spread the word and dispel the myths about African violets. My first foray into this area was about ten years ago when I was a member of the Bergen County African Violet Society in Dumont, NJ. Four or five of us would speak at garden clubs, women's clubs, nursing homes, and any place that would have us. Two years ago, my present club, The Garden State African Violet Club in Mercerville, NJ, was asked if we would speak to a local garden club about violets. I went out with a group and gave a similar program as the one we did in Bergen County. This one engagement has given me the opportunity to speak to a number of other clubs. Once you are on their speaker's list, word gets around, and your talk becomes a program for a monthly meeting.

What makes the program interesting? It's a combination of things. A little history, some common sense, good information, and some shock. I start off by giving them a bit of history about our plant. Where it came from and how it arrived in the USA. This takes about five minutes. I put in a pitch for AVSA and display their publications.

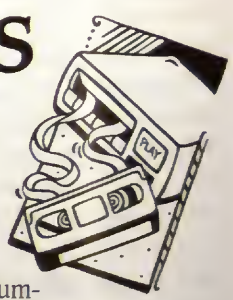
From that point, I talk about the needs of the violet. Light requirements, soil mix, watering, pot size, and repotting. This generally generates quite a few questions, which I try to answer as simply as possible. My main theme tells everyone that violets prefer conditions similar to what humans like. I also stress that violets are tough little plants, which want to thrive and will do so under the most drastic conditions. At a point where there are no more questions, I open my transporting box and pull out a few plants. I try to bring a standard, trailer, mini, and semiminiature to each talk. After the ooo's and aaahhhs have ended, I briefly explain that a violet should look like a bicycle wheel with the leaves growing out from the center like spokes. A trailer is shown as a plant with multiple crowns. The shock hits when I start to take apart one of the plants. I purposely keep a few in poor condition for just this purpose. Although, for me, that is not difficult since so many of mine are out of shape during the year. Many times, I cut off the complete rootball which brings gasps from the group.

I have prepared handouts on rejuvenating plants and putting down leaves as well as a sheet on simple violet care. The plant that everyone thought was so nice is reshaped and disbudded. It is repotted into the proper size pot, and to the audience it looks very nice.

Before the last talk, I went to Home Depot and bought one of their plants to demonstrate on. It was one of the best they had, but by our standards was one for the compost heap. I had stressed that overwatering kills most violets and used the no name to prove my point. I pulled the plant out of the pot and squeezed the rootball. About a quarter cup of water cascaded out, showing them how the potting mix of almost pure peat retained enough water which would most likely kill the plant in a few weeks. The plant was groomed; I removed secondary leaves, three or four tiny suckers, and replaced it into the proper size pot using my soil mix. The excess leaves from all of this carnage were left on the table, and how to put down a leaf was demonstrated. Most members were eager to take a leaf or two home to try and raise a plant.

A final wrap-up of slides, which I have taken at shows, was shown. Almost all the members had never been to a violet show and were wide eyed at the variety, size, and condition of the plants. The commercial comes at the end when I tell them where and when local clubs meet and give them the dates of shows in the area. A program such as this never fails to generate interest in growing violets. Whether or not it will induce any people to join a club is questionable. This type of program can be done by almost any member of a local club - even someone who is fairly new to the game. You have to remember that most people have had little luck with violets and are eager to have something blooming in their homes, especially during the long winter doldrums. Another positive thing it does is generate money which I donate to one of our funds. Mary Walbrick, get ready for a couple more checks.

GESNERIAD AND SPECIES WORKSHOP VIDEO



A new addition to the AVSA Library is now available. It is a video tape of the Gesneriad and Species presentation from the 2003 National Convention in Baton Rouge, LA. Though the images are somewhat dark, the information is excellent. This video would be part of a good program for a Judges' Council or for individual viewing. AVSA Library rental number for "Gesneriad and Species Workshop" is 207L.

What's Missing From This Picture?

Chances are, few of today's garden centers know as much about growing African Violets as you do. No doubt, this explains why so many knowledgeable Violet growers have a hard time finding the products they need. For anyone who knows what it takes to grow beautiful, full-blooming African Violets, it can be like putting together a puzzle, only to find there's a piece missing. We know the feeling. That's why we started the Selective Gardener, a plant care supplier that specializes in products for African Violets.

Everything You Need to Grow Beautiful, Full-Blooming African Violets

The Selective Gardener makes it easy to get the products you need. As a plant care supplier that specializes in African Violets, the Selective Gardener carries a full line of plant care products with brand names like Optimara.

- Fully-dissolving, urea-free fertilizers
- Self-watering devices such as the Watermaid and the new, spill-proof Optimara WaterShip
- Ultralight, pH-balanced potting media
- Pots, trays and plant covers
- Show accessories and more

From Leaf Cuttings to Finished Violets

In addition to plant care products, the Selective Gardener offers African Violets in several pot sizes, including genuine Miniatures. You can also order leaf cuttings from all of the available Optimara and Rhapsodie varieties.

A Complete African Violet Resource

The Selective Gardener is a complete African Violet resource. Send for the Selective Gardener catalog, and you will find offers for plant care products, Violets and leaf cuttings, even books and posters. Or go online, and you will find even more. At the Selective Gardener's internet site (http://www.selectivegardener.com), you will have access to a number of resources not available anywhere else.

- Growing tips from the world famous Holtkamp Greenhouses
- Complete interactive Violet identification guide
- Links to other useful sites such as Doctor Optimara, a symptom-based, interactive guide for diagnosing pests and pathogens
- Reviews of African Violet products

(**Tip:** If you do not have access to the internet, try your public library. Many libraries, now, provide computers for public use, as well as helpful assistance for anyone wanting to go online.)

The Selective Gardener Catalog

To receive the Selective Gardener catalog, send $1 (which will be credited to your first order) with your name and address to:

The Selective Gardener
6011 Martingale Lane
Brentwood, TN 37027

Or visit us online at
http://www.selectivegardener.com.

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Membership & Promotion on the Statewide Level

Adrienne Rieck, *Vice Chair, Membership & Promotion Committee*
Annie97@aol.com

What is the purpose of the Membership & Promotion Committee? *Expanding, developing, and promoting the Society is the purpose of this committee. Developing ways to increase membership world-wide is its goal.* Originally, I thought about this purpose and goal only in terms of new AVSA members. Lately, I've been thinking about membership and promotion in some different ways – particularly at the state level.

I believe that Membership & Promotion has four levels:

National
State
Affiliate
Individual

We hear a lot about what we can do on the individual, affiliate, and national levels; they focus primarily on garnering new members outside their existing organizations – but what about our state organizations? How do they fit into the M&P organization?

With their focus on new members, the national, affiliate, and individual levels market themselves *externally*. A state organization can do this as well, but it generally exists for the benefit of its local affiliates. Our state organizations have a unique opportunity to market themselves *internally*. Their "customers" are the local affiliates within their respective states.

My most recent experience has been with the African Violet Council of Southern California ("Council"). They are a very good example of what a state organization can do and provide to its local affiliates – please, think of your own state organization as we go through a few things!

Council meets on a quarterly basis and is comprised of affiliate presidents, members, and members-at-large. It is governed by Bylaws and Standing Rules and has elected officers. In conjunction with the Northern California Council (it's a big state!), Council publishes a quarterly newsletter, which is available for a nominal annual subscription fee.

Council sponsors an AVSA-judged show every year. In California's case, this means that each council (North and South) has a council show one year, and a combined State show the next. This gives local affiliates a chance to compete on a regional and/or state level if they choose, provides a venue for judges to show their plants and accumulate the ribbons required by their judging certificates, and promotes teamwork and camaraderie between affiliates throughout the state.

Sounds pretty good, huh? But there can be more . . . As I mentioned before, a statewide organization has a very unique spot in the M&P picture. Certainly it will do some external marketing – it should be one of the first places your local garden clubs call when they need a speaker – but it can be a tremendous resource for the local affiliate. Here's where it all comes together!

If you are active in a statewide organization – here are some things that can be promoted *internally* to the benefit of every local affiliate . . . read on!

- Find out what kind of help your local affiliates may need:
- Having trouble getting new members?
- Guidance on running an effective meeting?
- Would an affiliate like to have an AVSA-judged show, but is hesitant because it may need some help?

Sometimes it's as simple as a couple of phone calls or a little time spent one-on-one to pave the way to great communication and working together. That's what internal marketing does – it paves the way to success by giving your affiliates the tools they need to succeed.

Here are some additional ideas:

- Make sure that affiliates get the News From National!
- Conduct an annual multi-affiliate Sales Jamboree.
- Keep a speaker/program roster.
- In the absence of a local Judges' Council, provide a roster of active AVSA judges.
- Offer a special recap of the National Convention at one meeting each year.
- If you have a state convention or show, find someone to take great notes that can be shared with all affiliates. You can see the recap that Carolee Carter and I did for the 2003 National Convention in Baton Rouge. It's available here: http://www.avsa.org/NationalConvention.html, about halfway down the page. Our Tucson recap should be posted sometime in June.
- As current Council President, Olive Pratt would say: "Think hands on." What about a special workshop – on design, repotting, or something that's of specific interest to your affiliates?

Now that I have moved home to the Chicagoland area, I'm looking forward to becoming a member of the Illinois African Violet Society. Hmmmm, I see they have a quarterly newsletter, and they sponsor the state show (with the help of all state affiliates!). Sounds to me like they've got a lot going on – I can't wait to participate!

Have you got some ideas for the Membership & Promotion Committee? Chair, Carolee Carter, and I would love to hear them! Please write us c/o the AVSA office, or email us at: caroleecarter37@hotmail.com or Annie97@aol.com.

Vintage Violets

Barbara Elkin
Vintage Violets Committee
2855 Gayle Lane
Auburn, CA 95602-9674
email: bjabar@earthlink.net

TIME?

Finding time as you grow older is a problem. You attack each day as if it were your last. How did I have time to work, raise a family, and have time for things like African violets?

Spring is here and I want to do the yard work. The plants need transplanting in the greenhouse. The weeds outside are proliferating. Help, help I need a vacation.

Have a great summer!

AVSA Most Wanted

Apache Princess
Austen's Love
Bishop
Blackberry Halo
Blue Eyes
(hybridizer unknown)
Dixie Darling
Dixie Snow
Dora Lee
Fancy Flirt
Flashdance
Fringed Charm
Gay Coquette
Grangers Peppermint
Green Crystal
Ice Flo
Kismet
Lasswell's Gay Ben
Lasswell's Gem Gem
Lasswell's Girl Friday
Lasswell's Glacier Peak
Lasswell's Sweetheart Sue
Linda's Love
Peppermint Fling
Regina
an oldie by Eyerdom
Rare Beauty
Rob's Blue Kazoo
Rob's Crazy Kilt
Rob's Ember Glow
Rob's Half Moon
Rob's Hocus Crocus
Rob's Little Josephine
Rob's Little Shmoozie
Rob's Lucky Stroke
Rob's Mischievous
Rob's Mountain Ash
Rob's Pal Paul
Rob's Pink Fizz
Rob's Swizzle Stick
Rob's Temptress
Rob's Violet Sky
Rob's Whatsit
Rob's Whimsical
Rob's Wow Wee
Rob's Zinfandel
Silver Token
Sugar Frost
(Swift)
Violet 'n' Gold
Zulu

AVSA Building Maintenance Fund

Mary Walbrick • 5235 Kingston Drive • Wichita Falls, Texas 76310-3029
email: MWalbrick@aol.com

Donations Received

Gulf African Violet Club, Fort Myers, FL . . . $10.00
In Memory of Lillian Scott
Sweet Water AVS, Bay Shore, NY 15.00
Margaret H. Adair, Duluth, GA. 10.00
Mark C. Bander, Dewitt, MI 50.00
Jeanne D'arc Brault, Brome Lake, PQ, Canada . . 2.50
Sheryl J. Farlin, Broken Arrow, OK 10.00
Bonnie Journell, Greencastle, IN 10.00
A. Faye Wiginton, Marion, AR. 5.00
AVS of Denver, Chapter One, Denver, CO . . . 20.00
AVS of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN 15.00
Georgia State AV Council, Stockbridge, GA . . 25.00
Metropolitan Regional Council of AV Judges,
East Northport, NY 1.00
The AVS of South Bay, Redwood City, CA . . $25.00
Janice A. Bruns, Hanover Park, IL. 10.00
Richard Curry, Rivervale, NJ. 10.00
Shirley A. Davis, Ft Myers Beach, FL 25.00
Connie DeCoud, El Dorado Hills, CA 10.00
Janeen Dougherty, Morristown, NJ 18.00
Donalda Ferguson, Montgomery, AL 10.00
Jill G. Fischer, Berkeley Heights, NJ. 10.00
Viola Fuller, Butner, NC 5.00
Nina Gresham, Princeton, KY. 10.00
Dolores Harrington, Fridley, MN 5.00
Margret M. Kline, Manchester, MO 5.00
Robert Kurzynski, Clifton, NJ 5.00
Lucienne Lemieux, Jonquiere, PQ, Canada . . . 5.00
F. Eleanor Mattaliano, Tinton Falls, NJ $10.00
Walther H. Ott, Bridgewater, NJ 25.00
Frankie Pletzer, Beaumont, TX. 50.00
In Memory of Leo H. Maschek, dear friend
Frances Ratte, Black Hawk, CO 10.00
Kay C. Schroeder, Clarksburg, MD 10.00
Lynda E. Vaillancourt, Hayden, CO. 10.00
Beverly Volk, Allentown, PA 2.50
Helen Wamsley, Pitkin, LA 5.00
John B. Warren, Newburgh, NY 10.00
Pamela Woods, Gardena, CA 5.00
D. K. Yeager, Helena, MT 10.00

TOTAL $474.00

Showcase

Sassy Sue

New Cultivar 2003
Hybridized and Exhibited by:
Hortense Pittman
Semiminiature

Photo Credit: **Winston J. Goretsky**

Frosted Denim

Exhibited by: **Jim Toms**
Hybridized by: **S. Sorano**
Miniature

Photo Credit: **Winston J. Goretsky**

Photo Credit: **Winston J. Goretsky**

Cool Blue, Red Bandito, Magic Blue

2nd Best AVSA Collection

Semiminiature

2003 AVSA National Show

Exhibited and Hybridized by: **Hortense Pittman**

Why Doesn't My Violet Bloom?

by Nancy Manozzi

There are several reasons why an African violet won't bloom. This time of year, the answer may be simple, especially if you grow in a window. The days are short and the light is scarce, therefore too little light. Also, if the plants are too close to the window, it's COLD! Feel the leaves, and if they're cold to the touch, it's too cold. Either put a sheer curtain in the window, place newspaper or a towel on the sill, or move the plants a few feet back from the window. However, moving the violets further from the light source may hinder bloom even more. You can supplement light by using a table lamp, but remember, violets do need at least 8 hours of darkness daily.

How long have your violets been in the same pot in the same potting mix? If it's over a year, they need to be repotted in fresh soil. Use a light and airy soilless potting mix which will provide good drainage. The ingredients should consist of peat moss, perlite, and vermiculite. Repot annually or better yet, every six months, as the mix breaks down over time and may become too acidic.

- Do you fertilize often enough or do you fertilize at all? Try a fertilizer recommended for African violets and use the constant feed method. Rather than try to remember when you fertilized last, feed every time you water at one quarter the recommended strength. Fill a gallon container with 1/4 tsp of fertilizer and water with that every time. Once a month, use plain water to flush any build up of fertilizer salts.
- Proper watering is one of the most important factors in a healthy, blooming violet. Use room temperature or tepid water, and only water when the top of the soil feels slightly dry. Violets like to be slightly moist, never wet. You can water from the top or the bottom but only when needed. They do not like "wet feet" so they should never sit in water for longer than it takes to drink up what's needed. Once the top of the soil feels moist, empty any remaining water in the saucer. You may be able to tell when watering is needed by lifting the entire pot-when the pot seems light, it is probably time to water. The air quality is also an important factor. African violets like good air circulation, 40%-50% humidity and no drafts. Fresh circulating air may be created with a fan, but shouldn't blow directly on the plants. Keep your plants away from open windows to avoid drafts. You might open a window, very slightly in an adjoining room for a short while, when it's not too cold outside.
- How many crowns or suckers do your singlecrowned violets have? Suckers, or small leaves, growing from the stem, rather than the crown, should be continually removed. Suckers will compete for space, food, and moisture, and will affect the overall performance of your violet. So, keep your singlecrowned plants to one crown.
- African violets need constant, consistent care.

Turn them every few days (or when you dust), water when dry, feed them regularly, give them enough light, pick off the old blossoms, keep the leaves clean, and repot every 6-12 months. Give them the attention they deserve. If after doing all these things, your violet still doesn't bloom, try another variety. Some plants may just not be for you!

Potting Tip

by Cheryl Salatino

After you repot an African violet, does it often look limp, then loses the bottom row of leaves?

Believe it or not, these are symptoms of over-watering. Moisten your soil-less potting mix before you use it. This can be difficult with a peat-based medium, because room temperature water will pour right through it.

Instead, try this:

- Heat some water in a kettle or the microwave (it should NOT reach the boiling point).
- Moisten the potting mixture completely with warm water.
- Cool the potting mixture completely prior to planting.
- Do not water your plants immediately after repotting.
- Wait at least a few days until the plants have had a chance to absorb the water in the soil before adding more.

From *Ye Bay Stater*, publication of the bay State AVS

Know Your pH factor

by Patsy Harms

pH (Puissance de Hydrogen) is the symbol used to indicate acidity or alkalinity, or in simpler terms, the scale which determines the acidity or alkalinity, of your soil, water, and fertilizer. At the top of the 14 step scale is sodium Hydroxide with a pH of 14.0 (very alkaline), and at the bottom of the scale is Hydrochloric acid with a pH of 0.0 (very acidic).

In nature, roots can creep around in the field to find the soil most favorable for its needs. We know that crops are grown in areas where the soil is favorable for that kind of plant; thus, wine grapes cannot be grown in the same soil as potatoes; the soil can determine the crop.

But we grow in little pots so we can design a recipe for our potting mix, a proper water supply, and fertilizer that will be conducive to good growing conditions for our African violets. The nutrients in the soil must be turned into microorganisms for the plant to absorb. The pH and the temperature will create the microorganisms activity that is necessary for the plant to be able to absorb the nutrients. The scale for African violets is slightly acidic between 6.4 and 6.9. When the pH is very high or very low it creates a condition called "phosphate lock-up" which makes it impossible for the plant to absorb the necessary nutrients. Over fertilizing will only make the matter worse.

To correct this condition, you need to first know the pH of your soil. If your soil has a pH that is too low (5 to 6 pH), you can add dolomite lime to your soil mixture. Many commercial mixes have already added this to their mixtures. If you prefer, you can water your plants with a solution of one-half teaspoon of bone meal to a gallon of warm water, or one-half teaspoon of Epsom salts per gallon of water. If your soil is too alkaline (above 7 pH), you can use a mixture of two tablespoons of vinegar to a gallon of water, using it to water your plants.

You can call your local water department to find out the pH of your local water supply. Most city water supplies have chemicals such as chlorine or fluoride added to them. By filling your gallon jugs and letting them stand for 24 hours, these chemicals will evaporate. Placing them in the sun will speed up the evaporation process. If you do not have a municipal water supply, you should test your water and adjust your pH by using a little household vinegar to correct water that is too alkaline. If you have well water, it would be strongly recommended that you have this checked. If your water supply is unreliable, you may want to use rain water (check again, as rain water can be very acidic), reverse-osmosis water, or water collected from your dehumidifier.

Fertilizers also contribute to the pH. Urea based fertilizers seem to create more problems in more acidic conditions. Soil has a tendency to drop in pH as it ages, so repotting is necessary because it keeps plants at their proper balance. The acidic condition can speed up the deterioration of soil components and cause the soil to hold too much water.

Some of the symptoms of pH imbalance:

Yellow edges around your leaves, stunted growth, fewer blossoms, and tight center leaves are all signs that your soil is too acid. Too much alkaline will cause your centers to be pale and the leaves will show brown edges and slow or retarded growth. Too acidic (low reading), and leaves turn yellow, edges brown.

If you do not want to mix your own soil, there are many commercial mixes available through AVSA commercial members or local garden shops. In checking with the local botanic garden, I learned that they use commercial mixes for potting their plants.

There are several devices for measuring the pH level of your soil. You can find sites on the Internet that carry them. I recently bought an Electronic Soil Tester at a garden center for about $22.00. It calls for a AA battery and will test both pH and fertility, so it can also be used for your outside garden soil. You can also send samples to your local Cooperative Extension Service.

From *African Violet Leaves*,
publication of the Illinois AVS

Ten Key Points for Violet Growers

From Bill Foster, Former AVSA President

1. Growing violets is a terminal disease.
2. There is no cure, but you can get temporary relief by buying new varieties.
3. You must learn to throw away leaves.
4. You must concentrate (especially if you are in a club) on growing plants that are show quality and AVSA registered. You will be attracted to many plants with the most beautiful blossoms and lousy foliage.
5. Keep only a few of your non-show quality favorites. The foliage will never improve when it's bad to begin with.
6. Remember to isolate your new purchases.
7. Think twice before community wicking.
8. When hybridizing, select plants with strong characteristics that will produce winning plants. Select the mother (pollen receiving) plant for the foliage you are looking for. The father (pollen donor) plant should possess a blossom type and/or color that you wish to attain in your new hybrids.
9. Wicking individually will prevent the transmission of disease.
10. African violets will bring dear friends, not only locally, but from all over the world. Many of the friends we have met are like family, and the thing is, you continue to meet new friends constantly. This is probably the most positive reason to get involved in growing African violets!

From the Newsletter of the Lone Star AV Council, Texas

Showcase

Freckled Flirt

New Cultivar 2003
Hybridized and Exhibited by:
Hortense Pittman
Miniature

Photo Credit: **Winston J. Goretsky**

Optimara Little Blackfoot

Exhibited by: **Sandra Lex**
Hybridized by: **Holtkamp**
Semiminiature

Photo Credit: **Winston J. Goretsky**

Photo Credit: **Winston J. Goretsky**

Episcia 'Strawberry Patch'

Exhibited by: **Tony Hulleman**

Question Box

Ralph Robinson
P.O. Box 9
Naples, NY 14512
email: robsviolet@aol.com

As is always the case, we are far too busy to reply to mail (or e-mail), though we do read all of it. Should you want a personal reply, we are more than willing to answer phone calls made during our normal business hours (12-5 pm EST), since we can work and talk at the same time. For those with access to the internet, we can be reached at robsvioletaol.com or via our web-site at www.robsviolet.com. The web-site also contains a wealth of cultural information.

QUESTION: *Most of my collection of violets at home have very light leaves, almost white. They aren't variegated, and they were all green-leaved when I first got them.*

ANSWER: Actually, I've just paraphrased a problem presented to us by a visitor to our shop. She claimed to be an experienced grower and mentioned this more as a curiosity than as a problem. At first, we thought she was talking about the reappearance of variegation and, given her description, likely heavy crown variegation. We figured that she might have gotten them during the summer, when the warm temperatures may have caused the variegation to disappear. With the onset of cooler weather, perhaps the variegation was returning. This wasn't the case.

After talking some more, we realized that by "white", she meant that the leaves had lost all of their color-i.e. a nearly complete absence of green (or any other color). This was a serious cultural problem, not a harmless curiosity. Wanting to know what could have gone wrong, we asked her how she cared for her plants. It seemed that her violets were being "starved" to such a degree that they no longer were willing, or able, to produce chlorophyll (and green leaves). Of course, she insisted she was doing everything properly (we knew better). She listed all of the things she did, including regularly feeding all of her plants with an "African violet fertilizer", in this case, "Granny's Bloomers". There, of course, was the answer.

We've always suggested that growers always use a "balanced" fertilizer, meaning a formula (N-P-K) containing approximately equal amounts of nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), and potassium (K). For example, we use fertilizers with formulas of 15-16-17 and 17-17-17 on all of our plants, all of the time. It's not necessary to use "bloom boosting", high phosphorus' formulas, even for blooming plants like African violets. Far, far, more important to good blooming is a good environment (i.e. adequate light, moderate temperatures), and good care (i.e. watering, soil, etc.). A well cared for plant, in a good environment, will bloom. It does not need to be "forced" to bloom. This is true even for "show" plants, where an abundance of bloom is needed. This is spoken from more than 25 years (and hundreds of shows) worth of experience-we've never had to use high-phosphorus fertilizers. They're just not necessary.

"Granny's Bloomers", as the name implies, is a high-phosphorus fertilizer. What's more, with a 0-6-5 formula, it has no nitrogen! A fertilizer with this formula should never be used as the diet for a plant. Nitrogen is the most important part of your violet's diet, the basic fuel, like starches (or carbohydrates) are for people. Without any of it, your plant will eventually starve. In this case, no nitrogen means no chlorophyll. No chlorophyll means no green in the foliage. This is a perfect, though extreme, illustration of why a balanced diet is so important in growing healthy, blooming violets. Always feed your plants enough nitrogen. If you do use high phosphorus fertilizers, do so sparingly and when needed-never as a sole diet.

QUESTION: *I grow a number of chimeras, and I know that I can't propagate them from leaf cuttings. I have a lot of friends asking for plants, but I don't want to remove the center. I'm afraid to do this, and I don't want to have to look at any ugly plant with its center removed. Is there another way?*

ANSWER: Chimeras, typically (though not always) those varieties with the striking "pinwheel" striped blooms, cannot be propagated by leaf cuttings. Leaf cuttings will produce plantlets, but these plantlets are not likely to be "true"-i.e. appear and bloom as the original plant did. In chimeras, different parts of the plant are different genetically, so that

leaf cuttings will produce plantlets genetically different from the donor plant. The only part of the plant where the genetic make-up is known is the plant center-where new growth appears. This can be carefully cut-out, removed, and rerooted. The "stump" that is left behind will then produce new growth ("suckers") that, when large enough, can also be removed and rooted, producing more plants more likely to be identical to the original plant. Is there another way to produce these suckers? Usually, we don't want suckers, and make a point of removing them (except on trailers and species). This encourages more bloom and allows the foliage to grow more flat and symmetrical. Now, we actually want them! Here's one way-disbudding. If suckers are removed to encourage blooming, then removing blooms will encourage suckers. This is something everyone who has grown large plants for show already knows. By not be allowed to reproduce sexually (its hoped-for consequence of flowering), your violet must try to reproduce by other means-by suckering. Of course, this means doing without flowers for a while, but it is an alternative to decrowning and those ugly stumps.

QUESTION: *Chirita 'Vietnam' (usbrg #98-083) grows very well for me, but I've never been able to get it to bloom. Perhaps it's just a poor bloomer. Is that true?*

ANSWER: This was a comment that I overheard in the showroom at a show last fall. I've seen this particular plant more than once in shows, and it always looks terrific, with perfectly symmetrical rows of pointed, fuzzy leaves and, usually, attractive stolons displayed around the main plant bearing those same leaves. Like this exhibitor, I've never seen one shown in bloom. From personal experience, however, I know much differently-it's a very easy and free bloomer. Most all of the chiritas are-they are well worth growing for those who've yet to try them.

The secret, as it is for any gesneriad that produces stolons, is to remove the stolons! I've grown this particular plant both with, and without, stolons. Those grown without stolons are almost always in bud or bloom (the flowers are a light purple-lavender, borne at the end of fairly long bloom stalks). Those allowed to produce stolons almost never flower. My suspicion is that the plant and stolons won't bloom until the stolons, themselves, become quite mature.

Episcias are another gesneriad that are usually not seen exhibited in bloom, and many growers have difficulty getting them to bloom heavily. Because they have such beautiful leaves, and are such vigorous plants, most growers don't bother to groom them properly. Most will bloom heavily, and regularly, if their growth is controlled properly. This is what we do. First, remove all stolons until the main crown fully matures and begins to produce flower buds. Then, allow the first set of stolons to mature and produce buds before allowing those stolons to produce stolons, and so on. By doing this, you will have a full plant with many large, fully developed crowns, each producing bloom. You'll have both beautiful leaves and lots of bloom!

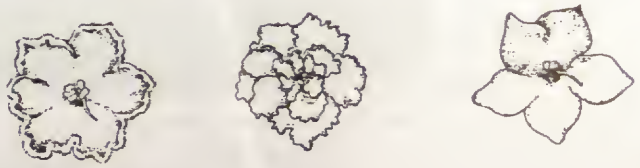
QUESTION: *All of my violets are showing very crowded centers. The center leaves are small and bunched together. I'm worried that I might have mites. Is that likely?*

ANSWER: Probably not. It's more likely that these were the symptoms of too much light and, to a lesser degree, too much fertilizer. This grower had her violets under artificial lights-4 florescent tubes above each 2'x2' shelf, less than a foot above the plants. The lights were kept on for 12 hours per day. This amount of light is far too much for most varieties of African violets, about twice as much as they need. Two tubes, about 10-12" above miniature violets, and 15-18" above standard-size violets, for 12-13 hours a day, would be sufficient for healthy growth and good blooming.

This grower also used Oyama pots and fertilized at the full, recommended dosage for regular, periodic, watering (i.e. "if you feed every time you water, use this amount..."). This type of pot is part of a constant-watering system where an inner pot, with a "slotted" bottom is placed inside an outer water-holding pot. Of course, this not only provides water to the plant at all times, but also fertilizer. Because the plant processes a greater volume of water when using this kind of pot, it will also process a greater volume of fertilizer. For this reason, fertilizer dilution should be cut to perhaps 1/3 or 1/4 of the regular amount, which hadn't been done in this case. The same would be true for any constant-watering system, such as "wick" watering or the use of self-watering "violet pots".

QUESTION: *Is there any way I can keep the water in my wicking reservoir from turning green with algae?*

ANSWER: Since the algae won't grow in the dark, one solution is to use a dark, light-blocking, reservoir. Another means is to add about 1/4 teaspoon of Physan 20 for every gallon of water. Physan 20 is a popular, easy, and relatively safe to use algaecide. About once every 3 weeks, we add it to our water to keep our capillary mats from turning green-it works wonders and, because it's also a bactericide and fungicide, it's a good preventative measure against more serious problems. We've also learned to use dark colored, acrylic, blankets (they can be hard to find), since algae is less likely to grow on dark surfaces and, when it does, is less visible.



Showcase

B-Man's Etna

Exhibited and Hybridized by:
Bruno Curcuruto
Standard

Photo Credit: **Winston J. Goretsky**

Cactus Rose

Exhibited by: **Sandra Lex**
Hybridized by: **I. Fredette**
Standard

Photo Credit: **Winston J. Goretsky**

Photo Credit: **Winston J. Goretsky**

Aca's Happy Star, Aca's Daphne Lakeshore Silver

Exhibited by: **Doris Brownlie**

Hybridized by: **J. Brownlie**

Semiminiature

A Family Portrait

Georgene Albrecht
101 Oak Heights Drive
Oakdale, PA 15071
email: georgena@verizon.net

***Sinningia* 'Emily's Sister'**

This miniature *Sinningia* (sin-nin-gee-ah) has the most glorious flowers. They are so very double, looking like pink rose and lasting for weeks. There is only one on each node, but that's all it needs. The foliage is very dark which gives great contrast to the vibrant flowers. The center of the petal cluster is a darker pink, almost a rose color. Well, it is the middle of winter so the cold makes the color pigment deeper. Petal edges are fringed. The tuber is about an inch wide and has three growths. Two will be removed and rooted, but one will be left on to keep the tuber active.

The reason my *Sinningias* have not been doing well recently is lack of light. The tubes had black rings around them, meaning they were completely ineffective and a waste of electricity. Six weeks after they were replaced, all the plants started to bloom. They seem to do best when placed about ten-inches under the tubes. When replacing the tubes, remember that new tubes can bleach out foliage and remember to mark the date on them so you know how old they are. Some of my plant tubes were two years old. I use one plant light and one regular cool white tube. They seem to work just great. If I am growing to show, I use two grow tubes.

I use Jerry's Gro, Watch-Us Gro, and now, this orchid fertilizer from Lowe's. All fertilizers are good, but it is necessary to rotate them constantly so that the variety of formulas provide a wide variety of nutrients. Also, I always add blood meal, cottonseed meal, bone meal, dolomite lime, etc., to my soil mix.

Well, I have been retired for three weeks. My plants are starting to look better already. They are being watered regularly and being repotted in fresh soil. Nothing makes me feel better in the middle of winter than to look at blooming plants. We are having a nice storm, and we have made provisions to have propane heaters available just in case the electricity goes off and our gas furnace can't function. I have made a large batch of my soil mix that was printed in my column September 2003. The plants are responding marvelously.

If you don't mix your own, Fafard is a good mix. I do add my own naturals to this, too. Fafard is widely available in two different formulas, one having more fertilizer added than the other, but I am not sure which is which. Anyone out there who cares to share this information, please do. You can contact the manufacturer at: Conrad Fafard, Inc., Box 790, Agawam, MA 01100-1790 or call 1-800-722-SOIL. Fafard is about the finest mix I have used other than my own, of course.

TRAY DOMES

If you have trouble maintaining humidity, try covering trays with clear plastic domes. The best trays ever are the sturdy Perma-nest ones which have a nice, tall six-inch dome. Some of my Perma-nest trays are twenty years old. They are discolored and a few edges are chipped, but they are still solid and in use every day.

STAPLES

A whole tray of my violets have no names because the pen I used was not really permanent. Growers on-line have been writing about a Sharpie pen that is "industrial strength" and will not fade no matter what. The only place that seems to sell it is the office supply store, Staples.

NO UREA

One of our club's new members cares for Lowe's nursery stock. He recommended we try the new orchid fertilizer because it has no urea as a nitrogen source. The brand name is Better-Gro, and it is for orchids. However, violets and gesneriads will love it. The bloom booster formula is 11-35-15 plus minor elements. The orchid green growth formula is 20-14-13 plus minor elements. This formula is for growing orchids in bark, which uses a lot of nitrogen. A 16-ounce package costs under five-dollars. Nitrogen analysis says the nitrogen is 10.59% nitrate nitrogen and 9.41% ammoniacle nitrogen. Notice, it also contains minors so essential if you have reverse osmosis (RO) water. So far, this seems to be only sold at Lowe's.

Of all the factors involved in growing plants, your fertilizing schedule is the most critical. My plants love a 'feast' of fertilizer. They are constantly fed a cafeteria of water-soluble and organic fertilizers. Maxi Crop is concentrated seaweed or kelp, and it is my favorite because, unlike fish emulsion, it does not smell bad. Another is Peter's acrylic blanket material which provides a nice humid base on which to set the pots. I also sprinkle one di-syston granule on the blanket under each pot to stop soil mealybugs from showing up. The domes don't last as long as the trays, but they sure are wonderful. Cape Cod Violetry, one of our great commercials, has both Perma-nest and the domes for only $7.25 a set. John says that they sell the dome separately, and that it is just a tad short for the standard 22-inch regular trays. I like a little air movement to prevent rot, so that works out well. They also have TROY capillary watering mat four feet wide. They are especially known for growing the species and the original ten hybrids, as well as almost all the growing materials you will need. Besides, they are just wonderful people, too. Glad they are both doing well. Their prices are great, and we are lucky to have them.

Charley's Greenhouse and Garden Supply, 17979 St. Rt. 536, Mt. Vernon, WA 98273-3369 has a dome one-inch higher but two of them cost $13.90 without any trays.

Important Notice:
SENIOR JUDGES

Senior Judges may apply for a renewal examination between May 1 and September 1, 2004. Send request to **Meredith Hall, P.O. Box 370, Marlin, TX 76661. Include check for $5.00, (payable to AVSA)** and proof of three blue ribbons as per AVSA Handbook, page 83 or S&J Column, AVM, Jan/Feb 2001, page 38. Allow three weeks for delivery. The completed examination must be returned before October 1, 2004 for grading. **Examinations may be received on Disk using Microsoft Word if requested.**

Those Advanced Judges who meet the requirements and wish to apply for their first Senior Judge examination, send check for $5.00 (payable to AVSA) to Mrs. Hall. Also send the following items of documentation of eligibility per AVSA Handbook.

1. List of all judging schools attended, grades, etc.
2. Signed schedules of five AVSA shows judged, (copy of signed title page with all show information is sufficient)
3. Verification of three blue ribbons earned per AVSA Handbook and S&J Column (AVM-Jan/Feb 2001). Allow three weeks for delivery. Schedules and cards will be returned if a SASE is included with proper amount of postage. Applications postmarked after September 1, 2003 will be returned and application may be made next year.

No exams will be returned until after October 15, 2003. Please include E-mail address, and you will be notified of receipt of exam, or include a self addressed postcard and it will be returned upon arrival of exam.

Saintpaulia grandifolia No. 7

Mather No. 7 – An Uncertain Species Clone

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One of the most puzzling new clones from the Sylva Mather collection is the plant labeled as *S. grandifolia* No. 7, or Mather No. 7. This plant is also recorded as S.A. Robertson specimen R6668 and is reported to be collected from the West Usambara Mountains of Tanzania. Cuttings of this plant were sent in 1993 to Iowa State University. I obtained cuttings of Mather No. 7 from Iowa State University in 1996. The clone has since been shared with a number of growers and may now available from a few commercial growers.

Mather No. 7 is a standard trailer with a coarse trailing habit. The leaves are elongated ovals and are up to 7 cm (2 1/2 inches) long and 5 cm (2 inches) wide when fully mature. The leaves are light green in color and are often wrinkled in appearance. The leaves are pointed on the tips and are coarsely toothed. The leaves are alternately arranged on the stems and show a light green or silver leaf backing. The stems and petioles may be reddish-green in color. This reddish color may also be present on the veins on the backside of the leaf. The petioles are often very long, being up to 6-8 cm (3 inches) in length.

The flowers of Mather No. 7 are about 1-2 cm in diameter and are usually found 2-7 per peduncle. The flowers are light blue in color and can show a darker blue eye in the center of the flower. The peduncles are thin and wiry and weakly support the flowers. Because of this, the flowers may not always extend above the foliage and are often hidden beneath the leaves. The plant is not especially floriferous, but a mature specimen may have 20-30 open flowers.

What is puzzling about this species clone is the label *S. grandifolia,* which was given to the plant. The true species *S. grandifolia* is a large rosette plant with long erect, short erect leaf hairs (LESE) and is also from the West Usambara Mountains. While the foliage of Mather No. 7 does have some resemblance to *S. grandifolia*, it is a trailer and has long appressed, short appressed leaf hairs (LASA). Therefore, the *S. grandifolia* identity that was given to the plant appears to be incorrect.

I am not able to recommend a more correct species placement for Mather No. 7 at this time. Based on the leaf hair characters (LASA) and the trailing habit, the closest species to Mather No. 7 would be *S. grotei* or *S. magungensis*. While Mather No. 7 does share some of the same characteristics with *S. grotei* (large size, trailing habit, LASA leaf hairs), the collection location is wrong. Mather No. 7 is recorded from the West Usambara Mountains while *S. grotei* is from the East Usambara Mountains. Possibly, the collection information on Mather No. 7 is incorrect, or *S. grotei* may have a wider geographical range than has been reported. Another possibility is that Mather No. 7 may be a species hybrid. Similar problems exist in trying to match Mather No. 7 to *S. magungensis.*

Because of this uncertainty in species identification, I would suggest that the plant be labeled in collections as "Mather No. 7". It would be accurate to continue the original label of "*S. grandifolia* No. 7" as long as people appreciate that the plant is not actually a *S. grandifolia*, but instead represents a species clone of uncertain ancestry or identity.

Mather No. 7 is an easy species to grow if you have the space for it. I usually treat it as a warm species, but it has grown reasonable well on the lower shelves of my plant stands. The plant requires a good amount of room in order to get the trails to relax and spread out. This plant may make a good show plant, but it will take some work to shape the trails evenly around the pot and to get the flowers presented about the foliage. I have also observed a tendency for the leaves to damage easily. Since the plant is a trailer, removing a few leaves usually won't harm its form, but care should be taken in spraying this clone with chemicals to minimize the number of leaves that must be removed.

I have not used Mather No. 7 in hybridizing. It does have a good trailing habit that might be useful in developing standard trailer hybrids. However, care will need to be taken in getting the flowers to show above the foliage in any hybrids.

In conclusion, Mather No. 7 is not a *Saintpaulia grandifolia* as was recorded in the Mather records. The plant does not have a clear species identity and may well represent a natural hybrid of some sort. However, this species clone does have a distinct appearance and can be readily identified from other clones. Therefore, it should not be lumped with other existing clones at this time. The plant is easily grown in a warm location, but will need a good amount of space to make a standard trailer show plant.

I Moved 800 Violets 1000 Miles in 1 Car in 1 Trip

by George H. McDonald

To be precise, the car was my PURPLE Saturn station wagon. Two hundred of the plants were in two Petri dishes, another 200 were in 1" pots, and most of the rest were miniatures and semi-miniatures (small ones). But I bet I got your attention!

One April, my wife received a call to serve as Interim Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Valatie, New York, near Albany. So I resigned from my church in Western Kentucky and went with her. All my plants fit in the station wagon. Since the temperatures went down into the 40s at night, we had to take all the boxes into the motel each evening, and bring them out after breakfast. I only lost one plant!

The seedlings in the Petri dishes had grown to the point that I had to invert another bottom dish on top of the plants, and put tape around to hold the two halves together. Voile! Terrariums for seedlings that took up almost no room at all!

I had recently re-potted another 200 seedlings into 1" pots. These I placed in plastic drawer dividers. From a local florist I got two four-foot long boxes which were just wide enough to accommodate one wide and one narrow divider, side-by-side. Three sets of these dividers fit into each box. I filled the remaining space with some unused 3 oz. Solo cups. Since the boxes were too high, I cut them down to just above the height of the drawer dividers. Small wads of plastic film kept the pots wedged in place perfectly!

When the back seat of the Saturn wagon was folded down, it sloped slightly from front to rear. The flower boxes fit neatly across the car at the base of the back seat. They provided just enough rise for the boxes on top of them to lie flat.

Many of you, as I do, use banana boxes to transport plants to shows. I cut extra cardboard to cover the hole in the bottom of the box and tape it in place. I use the plastic film from the dry cleaners to "nest" the plants. Normally, I can nest six to eight "small ones" in a box. This time, however, I put the film only around the outside of the box and got over 40 plants in each box.

I have discovered another space saver. Banana boxes are nine and a half inches high, meaning I can stack these two-high in my car. However, for transporting "small ones" to shows and sales, cutting the boxes to six inches high allows me to put them in the car three high. For the move, I cut back and re-potted all of my plants the month before, so I got them into boxes four and five inches tall.

Of course, my bigger plants - a few standards and episcias - went into boxes of the regular height. I put down cuttings from a number of my "outside" gesneriads, which traveled well in the shorter boxes. My ten gallon terrarium went into a small apple box. Staggering the height of the boxes kept them from sliding around.

While doing all this box cutting, I had to cut the box tops, too. I don't know why I had never thought of it before, but there is absolutely no reason to struggle with box tops more than two inches high. These two inches stay on well, are remarkably easy to remove and replace, and the extra cardboard can be used to cover the holes in the top and bottom of the boxes.

One final note: I bought a four-wheeled cart with a folding handle from one of those ubiquitous mail order catalogues. It fits on the floor of the passenger seat. It was marvelous for getting the boxes moved quickly and effortlessly between the car and the motel room. I highly recommend one for shows, for moving, and for other violet room uses, such as transferring bulk soil and gallon jugs full of water.

Moving long distance with my many violets turned out to be much less traumatic than I had imagined. And I kept all those boxes for use next time!

From *The Dixie News*

Coming Events Deadlines

January/February AVM - November 1
March/April AVM - January 1
May/June AVM - March 1
July/August AVM - May 1
September/October AVM - July 1
November/December AVM - September 1

All events notices must be in writing.
Submit by Email <rrumsey@earthlink.net>.
Fax: 409.839.4329 or
US Postal Service: AVSA Coming Events
2375 North St., Beaumont, TX 77702.

Planting by Moon Signs

Moon in Aries

Barren and dry, fiery and masculine. Used for destroying noxious growths, weeds, pests, etc., and for cultivating.

Moon in Taurus

Productive and moist, earthy and feminine. Used for planting many crops, particularly potatoes and root crops, and when hardiness is important. Also used for lettuce, cabbage, and similar leafy vegetables.

Moon in Gemini

Barren and dry, airy and masculine. Used for destroying noxious growths, weeds and pests, and for cultivation.

Moon in Cancer

Very fruitful and moist, watery and feminine. This is the most productive sign, used extensively for planting and irrigation.

Moon in Leo

Barren and dry, fiery and masculine. This is the most barren sign, used only for killing weeds and for cultivation.

Moon in Virgo

Barren and moist, earthy and feminine. Good for cultivation and destroying weeds and pests.

Moon in Libra

Semi-fruitful and moist, airy and masculine. Used for planting many crops and producing good pulp growth and roots. A very good sign for flowers and vines. Also used for seeding hay, corn fodder, etc.

Moon in Scorpio

Very fruitful and moist, watery and feminine. Nearly as productive as Cancer; used for the same purposes. Especially good for vine growth and sturdiness.

Moon in Sagittarius

Barren and dry, fiery and masculine. Used for planting onions, seeding hay, and for cultivation.

Moon in Capricorn

Productive and dry, earthy and feminine. Used for planting potatoes, tubers, etc.

Moon in Aquarius

Barren and dry, airy and masculine. Used for cultivation and destroying noxious growths, weeds, and pests.

Moon in Pisces

Very fruitful and moist, watery and feminine. Used along with Cancer and Scorpio, especially good for root growth.

May Moon Table

Date	Sign	Element	Nature	Phase	
1 Sat. 2:03 pm	Libra	Air	Semi-fruitful	2nd	
2 Sun.	Libra	Air	Semi-fruitful	2nd	
3 Mon. 4:38 pm	Scorpio	Water	Fruitful	2nd	
4 Tue.	Scorpio	Water	Fruitful	Full	4:33 pm
5 Wed. 5:08 pm	Sagittarius	Fire	Barren	3rd	
6 Thu.	Sagittarius	Fire	Barren	3rd	
7 Fri. 5:17 pm	Capricorn	Earth	Semi-fruitful	3rd	
8 Sat.	Capricorn	Earth	Semi-fruitful	3rd	
9 Sun. 6:46 pm	Aquarius	Air	Barren	3rd	
10 Mon.	Aquarius	Air	Barren	3rd	
11 Tue. 10:52 pm	Pisces	Water	Fruitful	4th	7:04 am
12 Wed.	Pisces	Water	Fruitful	4th	
13 Thu.	Pisces	Water	Fruitful	4th	
14 Fri. 6:02 am	Aries	Fire	Barren	4th	
15 Sat.	Aries	Fire	Barren	4th	
16 Sun. 3:57 pm	Taurus	Earth	Semi-fruitful	4th	
17 Mon.	Taurus	Earth	Semi-fruitful	4th	
18 Tue.	Taurus	Earth	Semi fruitful	4th	
19 Wed. 3:47am	Gemini	Air	Barren	New	12:52 am
20 Thu.	Gemini	Air	Barren	1st	
21 Fri. 4:35 pm	Cancer	Water	Fruitful	1st	
22 Sat.	Cancer	Water	Fruitful	1st	
23 Sun.	Cancer	Water	Fruitful	1st	
24 Mon. 5:07 am	Leo	Fire	Barren	1st	
25 Tue.	Leo	Fire	Barren	1st	
26 Wed. 3:52 pm	Virgo	Earth	Barren	1st	
27 Thu.	Virgo	Earth	Barren	2nd	3:57 am
28 Fri. 11:22 pm	Libra	Air	Semi-fruitful	2nd	
29 Sat.	Libra	Air	Semi-fruitful	2nd	
30 Sun.	Libra	Air	Semi-fruitful	2nd	
31 Mon. 3:08 am	Scorpio	Water	Fruitful	2nd	

June Moon Table

Date	Sign	Element	Nature	Phase	
1 Tue.	Scorpio	Water	Fruitful	2nd	
2 Wed. 3:52 am	Sagittarius	Fire	Barren	2nd	
3 Thu.	Sagittarius	Fire	Barren	Full	12:20 am
4 Fri. 3:12 am	Capricorn	Earth	Semi-fruitful	3rd	
5 Sat.	Capricorn	Earth	Semi-fruitful	3rd	
6 Sun. 3:10 am	Aquarius	Air	Barren	3rd	
7 Mon.	Aquarius	Air	Barren	3rd	
8 Tue. 5:38 am	Pisces	Water	Fruitful	3rd	
9 Wed.	Pisces	Water	Fruitful	4th	4:02 pm
10 Thu. 11:49 am	Aries	Fire	Barren	4th	
11 Fri.	Aries	Fire	Barren	4th	
12 Sat. 9:37 pm	Taurus	Earth	Semi-fruitful	4th	
13 Sun.	Taurus	Earth	Semi-fruitful	4th	
14 Mon.	Taurus	Earth	Semi-fruitful	4th	
15 Tue. 9:44 am	Gemini	Air	Barren	4th	
16 Wed	Gemini	Air	Barren	4th	
17 Thu. 10:37 pm	Cancer	Water	Fruitful	New	4:27 pm
18 Fri.	Cancer	Water	Fruitful	1st	
19 Sat.	Cancer	Water	Fruitful	1st	
20 Sun. 11:05 am	Leo	Fire	Barren	1st	
21 Mon.	Leo	Fire	Barren	1st	
22 Tue. 10:10 pm	Virgo	Earth	Barren	1st	
23 Wed.	Virgo	Earth	Barren	1st	
24 Thu.	Virgo	Earth	Barren	1st	
25 Fri. 6:50 am	Libra	Air	Semi-fruitful	2nd	5:08 pm
26 Sat.	Libra	Air	Semi-fruitful	2nd	
27 Sun. 12:13 pm	Scorpio	Water	Fruitful	2nd	
28 Mon.	Scorpio	Water	Fruitful	2nd	
29 Tue. 2:15 pm	Sagittarius	Fire	Barren	2nd	
30 Wed.	Sagittarius	Fire	Barren	2nd	

Reprinted with permission from Llewellyn's 2004 Moon Sign Book, published by Llewellyn Publications, ISBN 0-7387-0124-6

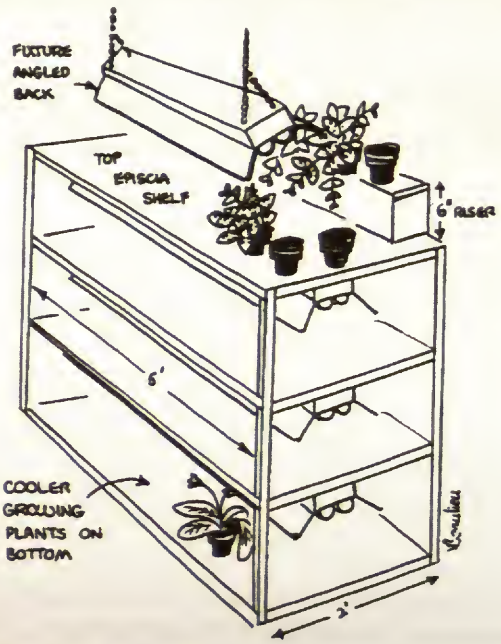
Plant Stands and Setups for Displaying Episcia

by John Beaulieu

When newly trimmed and potted episcias are just starting to grow and send out stolons (runners), they look great - neat and tidy. If you're growing on a conventional light garden and have a fair number of plants (having just a few plants is impossible with gesneriads), they will eventually start to grow together. The trailing stolons not only entwine each other, but can also start to root in neighboring pots. Many times, I've tried to remove a plant from a stand, only to have six others come with it.

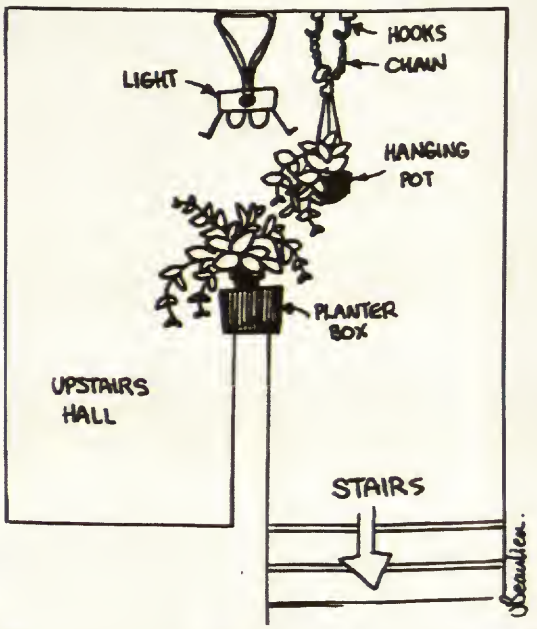
Sure, you can grow your episcias in hanging pots, but the average house only has so many windows suitable for hanging them near. Besides, in the northern areas, the windows can get too cool and/or dry for the warmth and humidity loving epicias in the winter months.

When I build a new stand, I build the top shelf for housing episcias. First of all, since heat rises, I figure the top shelf is always a little warmer, so it's great for the episcias. The middle two shelves would usually house African violets, mini sinningias, and other gesneriads (because of lack of space, I always build my stands four tiered). The bottom shelf which is basically just above floor level is reserved for mostly *Streptocarpus* or other cooler growing plants such as *Petrocosmia*. I normally have about 12 inches of space from plant to light tube. On the top shelf, I have more room and hang the fixture higher (usually from the ceiling), and rather than being positioned in the middle of my two foot wide shelf, I have it closer to the front, angled and aimed toward the back of the shelf. I add a small riser shelf across the back that gives me a second tier that can allow the plants to cascade down and make those at the back more visible. To me the effect is quite impressive. Since I am not showing my plants, I am not turning them for perfect symmetry, and they can grow in one direction.



My shelves are also five feet long, and I realize that with a single standard 'shoplight' fixture (four foot - two tube) that you do not have really good light over the entire area. I always have leaves (African violets) propagating, and these go in the low light areas until new plantlets are forming.

Another successful method used in a hallway is to run a chain along three ceiling hooks beside a standard light fixture, in the overflow light, so that as well as the plants in the main area, I have this backdrop of episcias cascading down. This light garden setup (seen below) is along a railing-high wall at the top of a stairway. The hanging baskets that can be placed at any point along the chain actually hang over the stairs (not wanting to waste any space). They do tend to grow to the one side, but that doesn't really matter as they are only viewed from that one side.



These arrangements allowed me to go almost a year before I had to drag out the sickle and cut back the plants. But don't let all this talk about overgrown episcias discourage anyone from trying them. You can always keep pinching off the stolons (of course rooting them for new plants to share), and growing your original plant as a single crown specimen.

From African Violet and Gesneriad News

Coming Events

April 30 & May 1 - VIRGINIA
Richmond AVS AVSA Judged Show/Sale
Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens
1600 Lakeside Ave.
Richmond, VA
Apr 30 - 1pm - 5pm
May 1 - 9am - 5pm
Info: Bill Schmidt (804) 266 - 6157
Email: Schmidt.wc@verizon.net

April 30 & May 1 - ALBERTA, CANADA
Stampede City AVS 28th Annual Judged Show/Sale
Northland Village Mall
5111 Northland Drive N.W.
Calgary, Alberta
Apr 30 - 10am - 9pm
May 1 - 9am - 4pm
Info: Winston J. Goretsky (403) 241 - 8300
Email: violets@telus.net
Web Site: http://www3.telus.net/scavs

April 30 - May 2 - NEW JERSEY
Garden State AVC Show/Sale
Market Fair
Rt. 1 South
Lawrenceville, NJ
Start: Apr 30 - Noon
Close: May 2 - 4pm

April 30 - May 2 - PENNSYLVANIA
AVS of Springfield 53rd Annual Show
Springfield Mall
Baltimore Pike
Springfield, PA
Info: Brenda Nyce (610) 358 - 3115
Joan Santino (610) 485 - 0211

May 1 - 3 - IOWA
Evening AVC of Des Moines Show/Sale
Merle Hay Mall
3850 Merle Hay Rd
Des Moines, IA
May 1 - 4pm - 8:30pm
May 2 - 10am - 9pm
May 3 - Noon - 4pm
Info: Joan Watts
Email: jojewels@netins.net

May 1 & 2 - WISCONSIN
Oshkosh AVS AVSA Judged Show/Sale
St. Josaphat Church
1333 Walnut St
Oshkosh, WI
May 1 - 10am - 4:30pm
May 2 - 9:30am - 3pm
Info: Kevin Degner (920) 426 - 3764
Email: kdegner@mcleodusa.net

May 1 & 2 - OHIO
Columbus AVS Show/Sale
Franklin Park Conservatory
1777 East Broad St.
Columbus, OH
Both Days: 10am - 4pm
Info: Nancy Carr (614) 864 - 8130
Email: afvioletfan@insight.rr.com

May 1 & 2 - NEW YORK
AV & Gesneriad Society of WNY Show/Sale
Walden Galleria Mall
Cheektowaga, NY
May 1 - 10am - 9pm
May 2 - 10am - 4pm
Info: Holly Pohl (716) 684 - 1387
Email: Corabells@aol.com

May 1 & 2 - ILLINOIS
Late Bloomers AVS AVSA Judged Show/Sale
Colonial Village Mall
1240 South Alpine Rd.
Rockford, IL
May 1 - 10am - 6pm
May 2 - 11am - 6pm
Info: Jan Judd (608) 325 - 7273

May 1 - MISSOURI
Heart of Missouri AVS Show/Sale
Trinity Presbyterian Church
1600 W. Rollins Rd.
Columbia, MO
Info: Dorothy Anderson (573) 442 - 4798
Email: danderoz@coin.org

May 1 & 2 - MISSOURI
Metropolitan St. Louis AV Council Show/Sale
Missouri Botanical Garden
4344 Shaw Blvd.
St. Louis, MO
Both Days: 9am - 5pm
Info: Pat Dunlap (636) 789 - 3604

May 1 & 2 - CONNECTICUT
Naugatonic AVS Show/Sale
Staybridge Suites
River Rd. (Rt. 118)
Shelton, CT
May 1 - 1pm - 4pm
May 2 - 10am - 3pm
Info: (860) 283 - 5311
Email: violetdoc@webtv.net

May 1 & 2 - ONTARIO, CANADA
Lakeshore AVS Show/Sale
Sherway Gardens Mall
Centre Court
25 The West Mall
Etobicoke, Toronto, Ontario
May 1 - 11am - 6pm
May 2 - Noon - 6pm
Info: Beverly Williams (905) 275 - 5408
Web Site: www.avsc.ca

May 1 & 2 - CALIFORNIA
Ventura County AVS Judged Show
Pacific View Mall
Main Street & Mills Rd.
Ventura, CA
May 1 - 10am - 9pm
May 2 - 10am - 7pm
Info: Kathy Pendergest (805) 643 - 4834
Flo Naylor (805) 653 - 5546
Email: AuBrick@hotmail.com

May 1 & 2 - FLORIDA
Gulf-Edison AVC 1st Annual Judged Show/Sale
Garden Center Activity Center
2646 Cleveland Ave.
Fort Myers, FL
Both Days: 10am - 4pm
Info: Jean West (239) 458 - 9622
Email: westda1@juno.com

May 7 & 8- LOUISIANA
Top Choice AVS Sale
Barnwell Center
Shreveport, LA
May 7 - 9am - 4:30pm
May 8 - 1pm - 5pm
Info: Jackie Merritt (318) 371 - 0183
Email: scraphappy@wnonline.net

May 7 & 8 - OHIO
Parmatown AVC
Parmatown Mall
7899 West Ridgewood Dr.
Parma, OH
May 7 - 9am - 9pm
May 8 - 9am - 6pm
Info: Martha Bell (330) 483 - 3546
Email: mbell77@msn.com

May 7 & 8 - MARYLAND
Baltimore AVC Annual Show/Sale
Catonsville United Methodist Church
Melvin Ave.
Catonsville, MD
May 7 - 9am - 6pm
May 8 - 9am - 4pm
Info: Shirley Huffman (301) 953 - 7554
Email: Bshuffman2@aol.com

May 7 - 9 - NEW YORK
AVS of Syracuse 51st Annual Show
Great Northern Mall
Route 31
Clay, NY
May 7 - Noon - 9:30pm
May 8 - 10am - 9:30pm
May 9 - 11am - 6pm

May 8 - NEW JERSEY
AVC of Burlington County Show/Sale
Burlington Center Mall
Route 541
Burlington, NJ
Hours: Noon - 9pm
Info: Florence Murphy (609) 386 - 9234

May 8 - OHIO
Upper Miami Valley AVS
Miami Valley Center Mall
I-75 & Rt. 36
Piqua, OH
Hours: 10am - 9pm
Info: Shirley Jones (937) 773 - 3761
Email: violetgirl@who.rr.com
Terena Stotler (937) 492 - 6588
Email: dtstotler@earthlink.net

May 8 - WISCONSIN
Sundowners AVC & Crosstown AVC
Combined Sale
Olbirch Botanical Gardens
3330 Atwood Ave.
Madison, WI
Hours: 9am - Noon
Info: Alice Peterson (608) 833 - 5552
Email: petersonad@aol.com

May 8 - CALIFORNIA
Fancy Bloomers AVS Pre-mother's Day Sale
Coddingtown Mall
Gottschalk's Corridor
Gurenville Rd. & Hwy. 101
Santa Rosa, CA
Hours: 10am - 4pm (or until sold out)
Info: Alice Downing (707) 829 - 7760

May 15 & 16 - CALIFORNIA
San Mateo County AVS
San Mateo Garden Center
605 Parkside Way
San Mateo, CA
May 15 - 2pm - 5pm
May 16 - 10am - 3pm
Info: Gary R. Beck (415) 771 - 3242
Email: garyrbeck@aol.com

May 15 & 16 - CALIFORNIA
Burbank & Montrose AV Societies Annual Display/Sale
Descanso Gardens
1418 Descanso Dr.
La Canada, CA
Info: (818) 846 - 1241

May 18 - PENNSYLVANIA
AV Enthusiasts of Berks County Display/Sale
Berks County Ag Center
Welfare Rd.
Leesport, PA
Hours: 7pm - 9:30pm
Info: Email: BVGsok@hotmail.com
AVEBC2002@yahoo.com

May 22 - ILLINOIS
Illinois AVS 48th Annual Show & Convention
Hilton Lisle/Naperville
3003 Corporate West Dr.
Lisle, IL
Hosted by the Fox Valley AVS
Hours: Noon - 5pm
Info: Andrea Worrell (630) 515 - 1225

May 30 - CANADA
Toronto AVS Show/Sale
Civic Garden Center
777 Lawrence Ave. E
Toronto
Hours: 11am - 4pm
Info: http://geocities.com/tavs.html

June 26 & 27 - CALIFORNIA
AVS of San Francisco Judged Show/Sale
San Francisco County Fair Building
9th Ave. at Lincoln Way
San Francisco, CA
June 26 - Noon - 4pm
June 27 - 10am - 3pm
Info: Gary R. Beck (415) 771 - 2342
Email: garyrbeck@aol.com

2004 VACATION GUIDE

Compiled by David Buttram

It's time to begin making plans for a day trip or vacation. When making plans to travel, be sure to include a stop at your favorite AVSA Commercial Member. Some of the Commercial Members listed below (including two Canadian growers) are new to this annual guide and invite you to visit and see the latest varieties as well as growing supplies. Most of them also grow a wide selection of other gesneriads and houseplants. Please note that several growers are available by appointment only. Please make the necessary arrangements for your visit by mail, phone or e-mail well in advance of your visit.

The list of growers is laid out as though you were driving from New York southward to Pennsylvania. Then the growers are listed in a zigzag manner up and down across our great country winding up in Washington. Drive safely and enjoy you trip.

Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses, Inc.
Paul Sorano
14 Mutchler St.
P.O. Box 249, Dolgeville, NY 13329
315-429-8291
info@lyndonlyon.com
8:00 AM-4:00 PM (Mon- Fri)
10 AM-4 PM (Sat), Noon-4:00 PM
(Sun - April through Sept only).
African violets, Gesneriads, located just ten minutes off Interstate 90, in the foothills of the Adirondack Mountains.
www.lyndonlyon.com

Violet Venture
Fay Wagman
52 Harper Dr., Pittsford, NY 14534
585-381-6384
faywagman@mac.com
By appointment - please call ahead.
Visitors welcome.
Retail, standards, minis, supplies, variegates, gesneriads.

Rob's Violets
Rob & Olive Ma Robinson
7209 County Rd. 12
(P.O. Box 9), Naples, NY 14512
585-374-8592
Noon – 5:00 PM, every day of the week.
Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Years Day.
African violets, other gesneriads, and rare and unusual flowering houseplants.
Begonias, Hoyas. We ship anywhere in the world, anytime of the year.
Tours welcome.
www.violetbarn.com

VioletsFun Photo Journal
Olive Ma Robinson
7209 County Rd. 12
(P.O. Box 9), Naples, NY 14512
585-374-8592 E-mail: violetsfun@aol.com
Noon – 5:00 PM, every day of the week.
Color photo journal.
www.violetbarn.com

Violet Gallery
Mahlen & Brenda Petry
1590 Cranberry Rd.
York Springs, PA 17372
717-528-8268
mpetry@cvn.net
By appointment, please call.
Retail, standards, minis, variegates, supplies.
www.violetgallery.com

The Behnke Nurseries Co.
Incorporated
1130 Baltimore Ave.
Beltsville, MD 20705
301-937-1100
9:00 AM to 5:00 PM – Seven days a week
General commercial varieties - Optimara, etc

Arts & Crafts by Eloisa
Eloisa Wilson
P.O. Box 220114, Chantilly, VA 20153
703-815-1984
eloisa@calle50.com
24/7 - Internet only
Retail, supplies – ceramic African violet pots.
www.violetpots.com

Bluebird Greenhouse
Libbie Glembocki
4821 Jessie Rd., Apex, NC 27539
919-362-0530 FAX: 919-362-5822
libbie@attglobal.net
9 -12 weekdays. Afternoons & weekends by appointment.
Retail, wholesale, violets, orchids, supplies.
www.bluebirdgreenhouse.com

African Violets by Frederick's, Inc.
Alyce Droege
51 Union Otto Daycare Road
(P.O. Box 1416)
Franklin, NC 28734
1-800-771-0899 or 828-349-4832
9:00 AM to 4:00 PM Mon-Fri.- Sat.
9:00 AM to 12:00 PM – Sunday
By appointment only.
African violets, gesneriads and all supplies.

Palm Hammock Orchid Estate, Inc.
Tim and Pam Anderson
9995 S.W. 66th St., Miami, FL 33173
305-274-9813
9:00 AM to 5:00 PM Monday – Friday.
9:00 AM to 4:00 PM on Sat.

Travis' Violets
Travis & Darlene Davis
2064 Ellen St.
P.O. Box 42, Ochlocknee, GA 31773
912-574-5236 FAX: 912-574-5605
tviolets@aol.com
Open 7 days a week (our choice) with an appointment.
Retail, wholesale, blooming plants available from May through November, supplies.

Pat's Patch
Pat Hancock
7132 Shurz Rd., Middletown, OH 45042
513-425-0308
Monday through Saturday. Please call for appointment.
"Buckeye" and other hobby hybrids, standard African violets, "Super Soil," starter plants, leaves, Oyama pots.

Belisle's
Marcia Belisle
P.O. Box 111, Radisson, WI 54867
715-945-2687
By appointment.
Retail, standards, minis, variegates, gesneriads.

Source Tech Bio, Inc.
Will Hartfeldt
7449 Cahill Road, Edina, MN 55439
800-356-8733
8:00 AM to 5:00 PM (Central Time)
Phytan 27, Bactericide and Fungicide.

American Nursery Products
R. J. Gleich
2311 E. Hwy. 50, Yankton, SD 57078
605-665-8130
inasnap@dtgnet.com
8:00 AM to 5:00 PM
700 varieties of African violets
www.americannurseryproducts.com

Kent's Flowers
Kent & Joyce Stork
2501 E. 23rd, Fremont, NE 68025
402-721-1478
kents@tvsonline.net
9:00 AM through 5:00 PM (Mon.-Sat.).
African violets, plants and supplies, along with fresh flowers.

McKinney's Glasshouse
James B. McKinney and Charles W. Pickard
P.O. Box 782282, Wichita, KS 67278
316-838-0097 and 316-838-5090
9:00 AM to 5:00 PM
Appointment appreciated.
Gesneriads, dwarf terrarium plants, rare and exotic tropicals. (Company established in 1946.)

Pat's Pets
Gary & Pat Dunlap
4189 Jarvis Rd., Hillsboro, MO 63050
636-789-3604
patspets@jcn1.com
Please contact us by E-mail, phone or mail for appointment.
African violets, gesneriads, potting mix, supplies. Internet catalog
www.jcn1.com/patspets

Dave's Violets
David Harris
1372 S. Kentwood Ave.
Springfield, MO 65804-0220
417-887-8904
plantman@ipa.net
By appointment only.
African violets, gesneriads and supplies.
www.davesviolets.com

Sonja's Violets
Sonja J. Holm
15980 W. Warden Rd., Omaha, AR 72662
870-426-1791
10:00 AM to 3:00 PM.
Standard plants, large blossoms.

Bayou Violets
Genelle Armstrong
1313 Gardenia Dr., Metairie, LA 70005
504-837-4037
By appointment only.
AV leaves, some plants and supplies.

JoS Violets
Joanne Schrimsher
2205 College Dr., Victoria, TX 77901
361-575-1344
josviolets@yahoo.com
By appointment. Evenings and weekends.
African violets and supplies.
geocities.com/josviolets

Shirley's House of Violets
Sandy & Shirley Sanders
1034 Rayburn Dr.
San Antonio, TX 78221
210-923-1093
9:00 AM to 4:00 PM
Retail, standards, minis, variegates, soil, pots, fertilizer

African Violet Shop
Lenora Munk
2015 Bauer Drive, Houston, TX 77080
713-468-0844
Please call for appointment
Home of Apache and Rodeo Series

Hill Country African Violets & Nursery
Ken Froboese
32005 I.H. 10 West, Boerne, TX 78006
830-249-2614 FAX: 830-249-8658
8:00 AM –6:00 PM, 7 days a week
NO LISTS - NO SHIPPING Complete retail nursery. Visitors welcome.

The Violet Showcase
Douglas & Barbara Crispin
3147 So. Broadway
Englewood, CO 80110
303-761-1770 FAX: 303-762-1808
10:00 AM-5:00 PM. Mondays and Wednesdays through Saturdays
Closed Tuesdays and Sundays.
African violets and growing supplies.
violetshowcase.com.

Claudia's Ceramics
Claudia Ahlberg
4656 Clayton, Fowler, CA 93625
824-6400 or 834-3404
9:00 AM to 6:00 PM
Greenware, bisque, and painted items

Dyna-Gro Nutrition Solutions
David Neal
1065 Broadway, San Pablo, CA 94806
510-233-0254
info@dyna-gro.com
8:00 AM-5:00 PM (Monday - Friday).
Retail, wholesale – plant nutrients

Violet Perfection by Gini
Gini McCanne
1420 Oxford Ave., Claremont, CA 91711
909-624-8331
violetperfection@earthlink.net
By appointment only.
African violets, streps, self-watering ceramic and plastic pots.
violetperfection.com

Alannah's Greenhouses
Alannah Regan
Box 2, Danville, WA 99121
250-442-2552
By appointment. Mail order
Standards, minis, variegates, gesneriads, geraniums, and tropical plants.
www.alannah.com

Beverly's Violets and Gifts
Beverly Hendrick's
6311 DeBarr Road, #Q - Russian Jack Plaza
Anchorage, AK 99504
907-338-5551
12:00 Noon to 5:30 PM
Tuesday - Saturday
Violets, streps, Self-watering Oyama Planters, Dyna-Gro` Fertilizer Violet soil (Beverly's), Native Arts & Crafts at wholesale prices

Bloomin' Basement
Ingrid Nelson
224 Douglas Woods Point, S.E., Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2Z 2A7
403-279-3826
"If I'm home, I'm open."

Violets-O-Ley
Nancy and Russell Ley
6819 Edenwood Drive, Mississauga, Ontario, Canada L5N 3X9
905-824-2950
violets-o-ley@rogers.com
By appointment - Please call ahead.
African violet, some species and gesneriad especially mini sinningias, epecias,
http://members.rogers.com/violets-o-ley

Pre-Show Schedule

by Pauline Bartholomew

From her book, *Growing to Show*

About three months before a show, the critical timing for final plant growth and inducing floriferousness begins. These steps can't be taken at the grower's convenience. If plants are to be at their peak condition at show time, the procedures must be implemented at the proper times. The weekly sequence should be entered in a calendar. The grower is then reminded to check the pre-show schedule and follow the recommendations given.

The grower walks a cultural tightrope in the next few months. The methods used to increase growth and blossoming must be carefully balanced against the risk of spoiling symmetry by creating off-sized rows of leaves or in burning or spotting sensitive foliage. Thus, the "advancing" techniques (increased light hours and foliar feeding) are timed and spaced with the temporary "retarding" techniques (decreasing nitrogen intake and repotting).

About three and a half months before the show, foliage should be washed in preparation for the final potting procedures that will take place. The foliage is then fresh and dust-free and prepared to put out the energy required for the new growth that is activated by the potting procedures. Double check for the presence of pests, particularly the more common ones such as thrips and cyclamen mites. If they are discovered at this time, they can be eliminated without damaging show plants and future blossoms. Try to avoid bringing any new plants into your collection during the next three months.

SHOW CALENDAR: Count back from the show date and mark the dates for 12 weeks prior, 10 weeks prior, etc. on the calendar.

12 WEEKS: Remove leaves, pot down (necks), or pot up. Foliar feed once in addition to regular fertilizing program.

10 WEEKS: Completely disbud all plants except perhaps miniatures and trailers. Put one new tube in each fixture. Start "bloom booster" fertilizer formula.

9 WEEKS: Increase light time by one hour. Disbud heavily variegated varieties and double varieties, such as Rhapsodies, etc. for the last time. Continue to disbud all other varieties. Continue "bloom booster" fertilizer.

8 WEEKS: Increase light time by one hour. Disbud doubles and lightly variegated varieties for the last time. Continue to disbud semi-double stars and singles. Check for suckers. Continue "bloom booster" fertilizer. Foliar feed once more.

7 WEEKS: Increase light time by one hour. Disbud semi-double stars for the last time. Change to 12-36-14 or 15-30-15 etc. fertilizer formula for the remaining weeks.

6 WEEKS: Disbud singles for the last time. Check for suckers. Wash foliage.

1 WEEK: Remove spent blossoms, peduncles, and pedicel stubs. Check for suckers. Brush away soil particles, etc. Pot down necks or pot up only if necessary.

1 DAY: Again remove spent blossoms, etc. Remove leaf support rings. Place plants in transporting boxes so that the foliage is supported.

Dealing with Whiteflies

by Joyce Stork

From the AVSA Web Site 'Frequently Asked Questions'

Whiteflies are a real problem once they get established. To be sure of what you have, they are about 1/16th of an inch long. Their bodies are covered with a waxy milk-white powder. Adults have two pair of broad delicate wings. Immature whiteflies will attach themselves to the underside of leaves. The immature ones are oval, flattened and completely covered with a waxy secretion that gives them the appearance of tiny scales. They damage plants by sucking out juices. Infested plants develop poor color and small flowers and often have sooty mold growing on the honeydew left by the flies. This can lead to dull, wilted, and yellowing foliage (in extreme cases). Be sure that you do not have a favorite host plant in the area (such as poinsettias) and windows to the rooms must be kept closed to prevent re-infestation. Finally, in using insecticides, you must check frequently every two to three days and apply to both the top and underside of leaves for 3 to 5 applications. You may wish to search for an IPM (Integrated Pest Management) solution on the web. It is quite possible that IPM has a predatory insect or bacteria that controls whitefly effectively without chemicals. These companies prefer to ship products directly to consumers rather than through garden outlets.

What Is a Girl Leaf?

In early days of African violet cultivation, the cultivars grown all had plain or slightly quilted foliage. At that time, there were few different types in comparison to the plethora available to us now; mutations often produced the first of a whole line of new varieties.

In 1941, amongst a large number of plants of 'Blue Boy', an early variety which is described as a "Single dark violet blue with pointed ovate leaves", there appeared a mutation with similar flowers to its sisters, but with leaves that had a whitish spot at the base where the petiole attached. The leaves also had scalloped edges. To differentiate this from 'Blue Boy', it was named 'Blue Girl'. It was reproduced and became popular, and there followed, via hybridizing, a good many other plants with these leaves.

This kind of leaf became called "girl", as distinct from the plain or quilted foliage, which are sometimes called "boy".

Because of a certain "tightness" in the leaf caused by the white spot, and because of the scalloped, sometimes, even ruffled edges, the leaves of these plants don't usually lie flat in neatly overlapping rows. Sometimes the petioles are rather shortened, and this gives a smaller plant with greater height.

Girl leaf types have never been seen much amongst those for sale in general nurseries and supermarkets. They used to be popular among hobby growers and such, but now we seem to have become more fond of flat growing types which have more potential for show. However, I note there are well over one hundred with the word "girl" in the their names in the Master Variety List (African Violet Society of America). Most of these would be girl varieties, as would many others, so why don't we grow them?

From *The African Violet*,
Official Journal of the AV Association of Australia, Inc.

Rejuvenating Your Plants

by Barbara Pittaway

As African violets grow, the bottom leaves become discolored and fall off. This leaves the plant with what looks like a tree trunk or 'neck' which makes the plant look ugly. If this describes your plant, then it is time to repot, and spring is the best time of the year to do this.

Before repotting, you need a clean pot, no larger than four inches, fresh potting mix, and if you use wick watering, a new wick. You should also let the plant become a little dry.

Turn the plant out of the pot and gently shake the old potting mix off the roots of the plant; if there is a lot of mix left on the roots, gently pull the mix off.

Take off any old leaves, leaving only healthy leaves on the plant. Then gently scrape the neck of the plant from the bottom of the leaves to the roots - the neck should look green and juicy.

To pot the plant, you will need to cut off some of the roots. It is advisable to leave about one third of the roots on the plant. If there is a part of the old neck down past this, then gently cut that stem when you cut off the roots.

Put some potting mix in the bottom of the pot, then center the plant in the pot so that the bottom leaves are level with the top of the pot. Carefully put potting mix around the plant, tapping the sides so that the mix settles - do not press the soil down.

Water the plant with tepid water, making sure that the mix is wet all the way through. Then put it back on your shelves.

Don't fertilize for about 3-4 weeks as the fertilizer can burn off any new roots as they form. After that, you can fertilize as usual.

From *The African Violet*,
Official Journal of the
AV Association of Australia, Inc.

Brave New World

~ ten simple things *you* can do to save the best AVs for future generations ~

by Richard Follet

1. **Discard one or more leaves when grooming** – not *every* leaf is ideal for propagation; hence, not *every* leaf needs to be propagated. Fresh, firm leaves propagate more easily and bloom true more reliably than tired or damaged ones. Choose 'adolescent' leaves full of vitality from the second or third row of the crown for maximum success, and only propagate what you can find a purpose or a place for later on.
2. **Throw away or give away a plant that will not grow well for you** – I cannot *count* the times I have given away a reluctant plant and have seen it bloom for its new owner almost immediately. Growing African violets is challenging enough without casting yourself in the role of nurse to a low-achieving plant. Growing space is always limited; find the AVs that will grow well for you and devote your attention to *them.*
3. **Purge no-names** – if you don't know what it is, *get rid of it.* There are too many vintage varieties in need of preservation to waste growing space on an unknown quantity. If you *do* know what your AV is, label it clearly and make sure any offspring take the name with them to their new homes. If your named variety has an AVSA registration number, put *that* on the label as well.
4. **Keep track of your collection** – if you know what you have and where you grow it, sharing leaves is easy and painless. More organization means more efficient trading, and more trading means more preservation of varieties and more excitement in the community. Nobody enjoys hunting for three hours through the light stand for a requested variety – this will only make trading a chore and discourage leaf exchanges.
5. **Let people know what you have** – publish your collection on an internet site or print it and share it physically with other AV enthusiasts. There is most certainly a great deal "out there" in personal collections more people would love to grow if given the opportunity!
6. **Limit the number of varieties you grow to the space you have on hand** – crowding African violets is a sure way to encourage pests and decreases the health of the population overall. It is often desirable to group small numbers of plants to increase humidity in dry situations, but sandwiching plants in to every available ray of light like so many blades of grass will sap their strength and make them struggle just to survive. If you cannot see daylight around the outer edges of each plant all the way around, your collection is overcrowded. If you want to grow more varieties, choose minis and semi-minis to maximize space.
7. **Grow at least one Vintage and one Species violet** – if every AV enthusiast growing today chose one heirloom and one Species violet to preserve and propagate, there would be a far greater number of varieties available to future devotees. In addition, many of these heirloom varieties contain genetic material that may be invaluable to hybridizers in producing new and unique varieties.
8. **Talk about your African violets** – whenever you have the opportunity, tell people about these remarkable plants and the rewards they can bring. Better yet, *show* them! Never assume that someone will not be interested. I teach in a Junior High School, and over the years I have brought many fourteen- and fifteen-year olds 'into the fold.' There will be no new enthusiasts if we don't share *our* enthusiasm.
9. **Start an African violet club in your area** – you wouldn't believe how easy this is to do, how little effort it takes, or how much fun it can be. Support will be there when you need it – there is nothing like the joyous task of helping a new club get started to infuse an established club with fresh energy! Look for a sister club in your state and ask them to 'adopt' your startup group. Local libraries and churches frequently have meeting space available free of charge, and AVSA offers low-cost liability insurance to affiliates if needed. A 'how to' packet containing necessary forms and valuable information is available from AVSA free of charge.
10. **Try your hand at hybridizing** – so many people are scared to try hybridizing when it is actually easy and fun. The two secrets to success are to be patient and to keep accurate records. A unique hybrid needs to be raised from seed and propagated by leaf or bloomstalk through at least three generations to make sure the desired traits will remain true, so you can expect your hybridizing venture to occupy two or three years of your life. You have to spend the next three years doing *something*, so why not give hybridization a try? There is no startup expense or special skill required – just patience and some TLC. Who knows – you might be the one to bring a brand new color or leaf type to the African violet enthusiasts' palette!

For the Love of Tuna

by Mary Alice O'Connor

People are very definite about how to start a gesneriad tip cutting or an African-violet leaf. So am I. Plastic sweater boxes, shoe boxes, bakery muffin tins are surely the answer. Some insist on McDonald's sundae containers, but when I tried to wash one, it broke in my hand.

It so happened that a tuna can was waiting to be washed and put in the recycle bin. I washed it (61/2 oz. size) and put a 9 oz. clear Solo (a brand of disposable cups) glass over the can, which fit perfectly and created a tight seal.

I have been curious about commercial soil-less mixes since fungus gnats once flew out of a freshly opened bag. I microwaved the mix, used it half and half with perlite, and threw in some charcoal.

Now I always root my African-violet leaves this way. Babies appear remarkably fast - once I had 'ears' poking through in eleven days. The only leaves which have failed are severely damaged ones or 'watery' ones. If a leaf is too big for the Solo, I bag the can until the leaf is firmly rooted and then cut the leaf to fit the Solo.

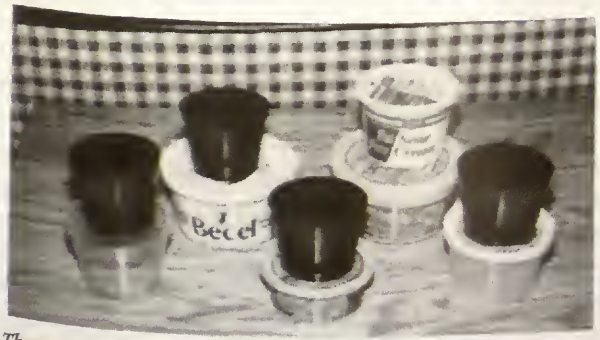
This is a mini-terrarium with water condensing on the Solo which drips back down on the soil and leaf. I put two standard leaves per can back to back so they hold each other up. Four small mini leaves can go in a can, or three if somewhat larger.

Tuna cans are free and reusable while the 9 oz. Solo Clear Cups are 40 for $1.99 and last forever. Soil-less mix may start at about $53.99 for a good sized bag, and I use inexpensive ordinary perlite (available at most garden centers). Plantlets are extremely robust, have lots of white roots, and transplant without shock.

This method saves space as I place the cans anywhere they will fit on the light stands or window sills. They go for weeks without needing water, and when they do, I use a beautician's squirter bottle to prevent overdoing.

Don't worry if you don't like tuna, as any similar can and clear cover will work. Experiment until you find the right combination of top and bottom for a good fit.

Bottled water containers are very good to use as miniature terrariums for propagating leaves, cuttings and even sowing seed. The middle portion of the bottle is removed to make a mini terrarium. the clear top portion is also perfect for placing over a standard pot. The lid can be left on and later removed for some air circulation



There are many plastic containers such as margarine tubs and deli containers that will recycle into perfect water reservoirs for wick watering.

From African Violet and Gesneriad News

The Little Ones

by Betty Tapping

For those hobbyists who have not yet become involved with the miniature and semi-miniature varieties - you will eventually! I say eventually as some may feel as I did in my early African violet days - I wouldn't give them shelf room as I found them to be poor performers compared to the large, showy standard *Saintpaulia*. That was in the late 70's, and for this initial assessment I apologize. I eventually delighted in the magnificent display of color as each year's offerings by our hybridizers surpassed the last - each one being as floriferous as any standard.

The key to their culture is probably to remember the name, MINIATURE. Adjustments should be made in potting and fertilizing to ensure these plants stay tiny; so put out of your mind any thoughts of treating them on the same program as standards, or they will grow far too large.

Mini leaves may be started three or four to a pot - cut the petiole on a slant to allow a good growth area and place about 3/4 inch into a moist mixture of vermiculite and perlite. You may prefer to use community trays if starting a number at once. If I only have one leaf, I will plant it directly into damp soil-less mix and cover with a plastic bag. This protected environment lessens the likelihood of loss. In my experience, this method also results in few but hardy plantlets.

Allow good sturdy plantlets to develop before separating - especially in the case of those with lightly variegated foliage. Appropriate size pots should be chosen. For instance, plants described by the hybridizer as micro-mini will do best in pots in the range of small thumb pots to 2 1/4 in. maximum size. Minis do well in 2 1/4 inch to 2 1/2 inch pots, and the larger semiminiatures in squatty 2 1/2 inch to 3 inch pots. Use of larger size containers increases the likelihood of coarse foliage to develop - not a desirable quality in these categories of *Saintpaulia*.

Once settled in the appropriate size pot, no potting up will be required. Instead, frequent repotting into the same size pot will be quite necessary in order to keep them within the correct size range. A good measure is available in embroidery hoops, which come in both 6 inch and 8 inch sizes. Since miniatures may be shown to a maximum size of 6 inch and semi-miniatures to 8 inch, you may wish to use these as a guide, especially if showing. As plants get beyond these sizes, simply take off one or two rows of leaves, remove from pot, cut away a section of root ball, and replant, placing fresh soil up to the last row of leaves. This will not shock the plant if done regularly.

Everyone has their likes and dislikes for a potting medium, but use a light textured mixture, either soil-less or with some soil added, which is my preference. The addition of extra charcoal will keep it sweet and porous. Pack soil lightly. Center the plantlet, making sure that the center leaves are above the soil level. Water lightly until the roots spread through the soil. In my experience, more novice growers lose minis at this point than any other, either by planting too deeply or by over-watering.

Always let your city water sit for twenty-four hours before use. This will ensure it is at room temperature and the chlorine has dissipated. You will find, due to the small amount of soil, they require watering at more frequent intervals than our standards in larger pots. For this reason, many growers grow minis on capillary matting. Several types are sold especially for this purpose, or you may use acrylic blankets or the fleecy interfacing used in dressmaking. Choose green or a dark color as algae, which grows quickly, is much less noticeable. Using Physan 20 will help slow algae growth. Pots may be placed directly on the matting with good contact if the pot is flat on the bottom. Other pots have a ridge - in which case you may opt to use a wick as well. Wicks made of fine strips of matting, nylon stocking material, or nylon string may be used. Tuck one end through the hole in the pot and the other on the matting. This procedure also works well with a reservoir of water when you are away from home for a while. A container of water may be placed alongside your tray and the end of the matting placed into it, or a supply of water may be placed directly in the tray and the matting raised on plastic egg crating. In either case, capillary action will keep plants happy for an extended period.

Many fertilizers are available and probably produce equally good results. I use 20-20-20 at 1/4 teaspoon to a gallon, along with one drop of Superthrive per gallon of water initially, and eight weeks prior to show time, I switch to 12-36-14 using 1/2 teaspoon per gallon. The extra phosphorous will quickly promote bloom formation. A word of caution: if you overfeed them, they will do one of two things - bunch in the center, or develop thick and hairy leaves which detract from the overall appearance. "Girl" leaved minis have a natural tendency to bunch, and you may have to remove a few leaves around the plant to improve its appearance.

Don't be afraid to try some of today's marvelous miniatures and semiminiatures - you will be surprised how well they perform. With these 'little ones' you can grow so many more!

From *African Violet and Gesneriad News*

The RID™ Recipe

by Danny Jones
Seattle, WA

One half teaspoon maximum strength "Rid™" lice treatment shampoo to 1 quart of water.

Add the RID to the water to reduce foaming. If mixing it in a spray bottle itself, just turn the bottle upside down several times to mix the solution after putting on the spray nozzle. If you are mixing it in a separate container, just stir the water in.

The active ingredient in RID that's effective against spider mites and thrips is Pyrethrin. It is spelled either "Pyrethrin" or "Pyrethrins" as the active ingredient on the label. Flea and tick shampoos for pets which contain Pyrethrin(s) are an economical alternative to RID, and you can use more of the product since it's a larger volume at a lower price compared to RID. I use 1 teaspoon of the flea and tick shampoo per quart of water.

WARNING. Even though Pyrethrins are found in chrysanthemums, a flower, and can be a natural product, it is still an insecticide and can negatively affect you if you inhale the mist while spraying. Wear rubber gloves to avoid absorbing it through your skin and make sure to avoid inhaling the mist while spraying.

To "shampoo" your violets, tilt your plants while spraying so the excess solution will run off. Make sure to also spray the undersides of the leaves since thrips like to hide there.

Let the plants dry thoroughly before placing them back under the lights. If water has pooled in the crown or center of the violet, blot it up with a tissue.

The "RID Recipe" can be used as a preventive maintenance to bathe your plants and clean the foliage in the process.

In my experience, this treatment does not harm the blossoms of the African violets; however, effectively treating a thrips outbreak requires at least four weekly sprayings and is more effective if you completely disbud the plants, depriving thrips of the pollen they love to eat.

This treatment is effective, and the ingredients are readily available from practically any drug or grocery store. A greatly added bonus of this treatment is that it's extremely gentle to the foliage and blossoms. It's also much less toxic than many harsh insecticides available at gardening stores. This can also be used on other plants to get rid of spider mites.

From *African Violet Leaves*,
Publication of the Illinois AVS

EDITOR'S NOTE: As with all new insect treatments, try first on one or two plants before using on your entire collection.

Self-Watering Pots

by Carolee Carter
From the AVSA Web Site "Frequently Asked Questions"

The self-watering pots that are now appearing in stores and arts and crafts fairs are so attractive. Unfortunately, they don't come with instructions! These pots use the same theory as wick watering your plants, which many of the African violet growers use because it cuts down on the amount of time needed to water an extensive collection. When you use this watering method, however, you must drastically lighten the potting mix in which the plant is potted. If the soil is so heavy that it gets waterlogged from the standing water in the pots, the root system of the plant has drawn up so much water that it eventually rots and collapses. The first sign of this collapse is that the neck of the plant begins to rot and no longer transports the water to the leaves, which then causes the leaves to droop. If you catch this quick enough you can save the plant by chopping off the neck just above the portion that has succumbed to the rot, repotting it in moist potting soil. Place the plant in a plastic bag and seal, checking from time to time to make sure that not too much moisture accumulates in the bag. In a few weeks new roots will develop and you can then remove it from the bag.

As long as you add quite a bit of perlite to your potting mix, you should not experience problems with your plants becoming waterlogged. (Perlite is the white sponge rock that is sold in garden centers.) Start with 2/3rds potting mix to 1/3rd perlite. Feel the soil to determine how wet it is, and pick up the pot to determine if it feels heavy. You will soon know if the soil is still too heavy, in which case you would lighten it up still further with perlite. If your plant still contains the same soil as when it was purchased, you definitely need to repot. Many commercial growers use straight peat moss, which holds way too much water for these self-watering pots.

First African Violet Society of Spartanburg Celebrates 25 Years

The First African Violet society of Spartanburg, SC, celebrated 25 years of growing violets. Our club was founded on February 22nd, 1979, by Mrs. Ernestine Wright. We became affiliated with AVSA on April 24, 1979.

We have been reflecting on the "then and now" at our club meetings this year. Our club was chartered with 32 members and Ernestine Wright serving as our 1st president. Of our original charter members, 5 still remain active: Ernestine Wright, Jessie Dennis, Margaret Harrelson, Mary Ann Kirby, and Dean Pool (our current president). We now have 28 current active members.

From the mid-80's to the mid-90's, club members participated in AVSA show and sales; however, today, we hold club sales every April. The money made from these sales goes toward paying for club advertising, activities, and donations to charities made by the club. Each of our meetings is spent learning more about this wonderful plant that we all adore and how to grow it better.

All our members are asked to participate in the meetings in some way from bringing snacks and drinks, to conducting programs, to holding offices within the club, to being encouraged to ask questions and give helpful advice related to each program. At the beginning of each of our programs, we all have the opportunity to participate in a bloom contest. We bring specific colored blooms for each month, and everyone gets to vote on their favorite bloom. We also take turns bringing items for our raffle table, and everyone can purchase a ticket and get a chance to choose something from the table. Best of all, we get to talk violets and see violets and learn more about violets!

Front row from left to right: Nina Williams, Margaret Ledford, Thelma Thompson, Ernestine Wright, Dean Pool, Georgia Wheeler, Mary Ann Kirby, Margaret Harrelson.

Second row: Dot Landrum, June Costner, Juanita Robbins, Betty Scott, Mona Evans, Mary Joyce Enderby, Lula Atchison, Jessie Dennis.

Third row: Jan Whitworth, Walter Soderberg, (slightly forward) Betty Jane Jeter, Julie Scott, Therman Taylor, (slightly forward) Mary R. Dawkins, Jan Blexrud, Martha Young, Marna Snow.

Members not photographed this day: Freida Corbin, Cami Ingle, Barbara MacDonald.

DISEASE AND DISASTER PREVENTION

When acquiring new plants either from a nursery, African violet meeting, or show, it is best to isolate them from your collection for a few weeks until you are sure they are disease free. Mites, mealy bugs, and thrips can be lurking in a new plant and not visible for some time.

Foliar mealy bugs are quite visible as little cotton wool sacks on the foliage and can be removed with a cotton swab dipped in methylated spirits, or alcohol. However, **soil mealy bugs** which look like tiny grains of rice about the size of a pin head can be seen sucking at the roots when the plant is removed from the pot. It can be drenched with an insecticide, or more successfully, all the roots removed and planted as a cutting.

Spider mite is microscopic, but the damage caused is visible with the center of the plant becoming tight, furry, and deformed. The buds may be affected, and the flowers streaked. Kelthane, a miticide, should be sprayed three times at seven day intervals. Most plants never recover very well, and it is preferable to take a leaf, well washed, and start again.

Thrips have become a very difficult pest to eradicate. It is best to remove all flowers and buds from the plants and spray with Avid, or other insecticides, taking all precautions.

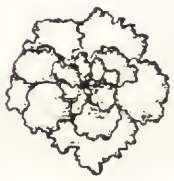
Cleanliness with African violets is very important. Pots and reservoirs should be clean, shelves wiped over with a bleach solution. Do not keep fresh flowers in the same room where your African violets grow as they may be hiding many pests and diseases.

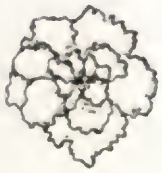
From *The African Violet*,
publication of the AV Association of Australia, Inc.

African Violet Show in Peru

On September 17, 2003, AVSA's affiliated club in Peru, **Sociedad Peruana de Violetas Africanas**, hosted a Home Flower Show. There were about 300 plants exhibited, African violets grown and displayed by the club's thirty members.

The show was a great success, with many winning plants. The members hope the next show will be an even greater success.





Avoiding Heat Stress

by Sue Gardner

Do you suffer heat stress in the hot weather? If so, give a thought for your African violets that can also suffer. Here are a few hints to help your African violets cope.

Sunburn

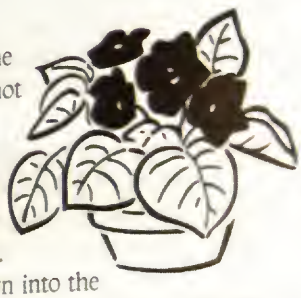
If you grow on a window sill and the summer sun shines on your plants, avoid the brown patches of sunburn on the leaves by:

a. moving the plants to a place where no hot summer light shines on them;
b. covering them with tissue paper till the sunlight moves off the plants;
c. use translucent curtains to reduce heat of the sun;
d. pull down blinds (interior or exterior) at least until sun moves off plants.

Hot, Hot Weather

If growing under lights, you can:

a. reduce light hours or turn lights off as they increase the heat around plants;
b. use a fan to move air in the room as long as it does not blow directly onto plants;
c. reduce the amount of fertilizer in the water. Plants transpire more (use more water) in hot, dry weather. The amount of water drawn into the plant is greater, but they do not need more fertilizer. So, reducing the amount of fertilizer will prevent fertilizer burn.



Low Humidity and High Temperature

If humidity is low in hot weather you can:

a. mist your plants with hot water, holding the spray bottle about 12 inches from the leaves;
b. place containers of water among the plants.

From the Newsletter of the
Early Mom AV Group, Australia

Violet Clinics: Add a Little Variety to Club Meetings

by Sandra Morgan
Toronto, Canada

At the beginning of the plant club year, the Toronto African Violet Society found itself with fifteen new members. We needed to help them to feel a part of our group and to learn some basics. The goals for the next meeting were to create an event that allowed us to teach, plus offer something to both new and more experienced club members. The event should also provide an opportunity for the members to mix and get to know one another.

We decided to hold a clinic. There would be five topics. These were chosen from the most common questions that the new members had been asking.

1. Putting down a leaf - separating a clump
2. Potting up, dealing with a neck on your violet
3. Soils, starter mixes, and fertilizers
4. Suckers
5. Wicking

Five tables were set up around the room. The individual presentations were to last fifteen minutes. The members were asked to start at any table in groups of five members. At the end of the first demo, the president rang a bell to signal that it was time for the groups to move to the next table. There was a break of a few minutes as everyone settled in; then we began again. The same presentations were given four times while the audience changed tables. The entire clinic lasted about 1 1/2 hours.

This proved to be a very popular event, and since the presenters shared the tasks, there was a limited amount of work for each one. This made it a pleasant assignment.

The more experienced growers all said that they learned something. I could see the "Ah-ha" looks on the new growers' faces as they discovered something new, and big smiles when they were given a new plant for their collections. It reminded me of when I first joined a violet club.

As a result of the clinics, we all started putting names to faces. This is a task I can always use a hand with. Our new members got a jump start on their growing skills, and the more experienced growers picked up a few tips and enjoyed the experience.

We had very positive feedback, and clinics have now been added as a choice for future meetings.

Steps for creating a Short Clinic Demo.

1. Think about a presentation that will appeal to your audience. For example, another club might choose to do several short demos that offer skills for preparing for a show. The sky's the limit, really.
2. Know your overall goals plus those for each individual clinic.
3. For example - This is what one of the one of the individual presentations consisted of. Geared to beginners, it would teach them how to a) put down a leaf, b) break up clumps, c) pot up plantlets.
4. Keep your descriptions at a level suitable to the audience. If they are beginners, don't use a lot of plant club jargon such as referring to the MVL. If you must, then explain what it means.
5. Decide if you will give handouts and what they will be. Always save them to be distributed at the end of your demonstration. If not, they can become a major distraction.
6. Gather information or illustrations for the handout, prepare it, and have a suitable number of copies made.
7. Find a box that you can use to transport your demo items to the meeting in and start storing them.
8. Write a detailed script. Read it through and adjust it for a 15 minute presentation. I print it in large type with lots of spacing. Number the pages and staple the document together. Underline or highlight the headings with a pleasing color. Place this in a brightly colored folder and store in the box.
9. Go through your presentation and create a list of the items you will have to take. There are usually a lot of little things, and it is easy to forget. (There were eighteen items on my list.)
10. Prepare required plant or plant material for the demonstration and for giving out at the end. Find your plants and prepare the containers, labels, or baggies. I decided to give each newbie a potted, named hybrid to help boost their new collection.
11. Make sure you have enough plant material. Put soil in clear deli containers with a clear label on it. Do the same for other supplies. You can use a plant stand tray or other plain tray on which to do the demonstration. I lined mine with a mossy green colored arctic fleece material. The plants really stood out.

12. A sample of some of the items needed for one little demonstration:
tools, watering can, pots, screens, markers and labels, sample of covered, vented container, bags for carrying plants home, handout sheet "how to pot up a plantlet", garbage bag, paper bags to put the potted up plantlets in, a pen, scissors, etc. The trick is to be organized - do lots ahead to make it look easy.
13. Next, create a brief overview of your demonstration.
a) Welcome and Introductions.
b) GIVE THE DEMO - Putting Down a Leaf, separating, and potting up plantlets, etc.
c) Question Time
d) Handout sheet
e) Plantlets given to new members.

Putting It All Together:

Before leaving for the meeting, check that you have the items on the "to take" list packed.

- Relax and read through the script a couple of times.
- Get to the meeting early so that you can find your table and set it up before everyone arrives and begins to chat.
- When it comes time to do the presentation, put the script away! Follow your overview to keep on track. You know the topic well so this will make it a very relaxed presentation. You are ready, now smile!

From the Newsletter of the
Lone Star AV Council, Texas

All Coming Event notices must reach the editor by the deadlines printed in the inside front cover and must be in writing.

After that Mail Order Plant Arrives

by Joyce Stork

From the AVSA Web Site "Frequently Asked Questions"

Shipping is very traumatic for violets or almost any plant. When they reach their new environment, they need to settle in and recover their vigor. Variegated plants will be even more sensitive. Transplanting, leaching, and fertilizer changes add more stress. Anything that is done next must be done with a very light touch, to avoid more stress.

The first thing I recommend is to take leaf cuttings from the sickly plants. Choose the healthiest leaf you can find (as much green as possible, avoiding variegation) and propagate it. If you have never done this before, choose a small pot or a styrofoam cup with a hole in the bottom. Fill it with a very light potting mix that is mostly vermiculite. Set the leaf stem into the mix, inserting it no deeper than about one inch. Water it until it drips and then drain until it stops dripping. Place it inside a clear zip loc bag and seal it tightly closed. Set it in a bright spot out of direct sunlight.

If it is healthy enough, it will root in about a month and begin sending up plantlets in two or three months (it can take longer, but if the mother leaf is still alive, be patient). Keep it in the bag until you are ready to separate the plantlets into their own pots (when the leaves are about the size of a dime). This will guarantee that even if your plant doesn't make it, you will still have the variety.

Next, try putting the sickly plants into a clear plastic bag or terrarium to raise the humidity and the temperature slightly, and again choose a bright spot away from direct sun. You will not need to water them often during the time that they are enclosed. This will allow the roots to rest (they don't have to work as hard in higher humidity) and will speed up the chlorophyll-building activity in the plants. You shouldn't try this long-term because of fungus problems, but it is very helpful for a few weeks. Once the plants have begun to grow again, open the container slowly over a few days to lower the humidity gradually.

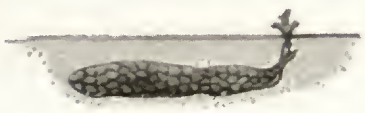
Rhizomatous Gesneriads

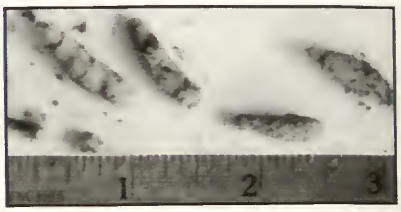
by John Beaulieu

Rhizomes are scaly growth that are usually produced in the soil among the roots. Their purpose is to ensure the survival of the plant during periods of drought by yielding new growth even after the entire main plant, including its roots, has died.

A plant can be started from rhizomes at any time of the year. They can also be started by tip cuttings the same way as most of the other gesneriads.

Rhizomes are great backup if you tend to forget to water your plants too often!

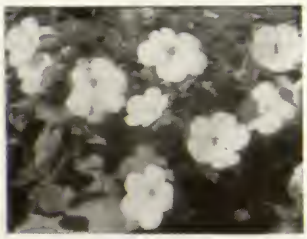




Most rhizomes range from a quarter inch to two inches in length, and some plants will produce rhizomes as much as a quarter of an inch thick. The rhizomes are scaly or segmented, with each of the scales having the potential to grow a new plant. They can be sown like seeds, but leaving the rhizome intact will induce a much stronger plant a lot sooner.

Achimenes (a KIM en eez)

These are the most well-known rhizomatous gesneriads, with blooms in shades of pink, blue, purple, white, red, and yellow. Some are even two-toned or spotted. There are also miniature forms, with the most popular being 'Tiny Red', a prolific bloomer with an erect growth habit and a deep red color.



Most *Achimenes* are grown as hanging basket plants and do well on sheltered patios, in greenhouses, or lathe houses. If good light is available, the baskets will flower all summer long and rival other common basket plants such as impatiens.

Kohlena (koh LEER ee ah)

Kohleria are a little harder to come by and generally require a little more attention. Their Distinctive mottled spotting is reminiscent of Foxglove or *Digitalis* of the outdoor garden. They can also be grown in hanging pots, or can be staked to grow upright. Growth can be rapid, but they get leggy after a while. Simply take tip cuttings to start a new plant or put down leaves as you would for an African-violet.

Smithiantha (smith ee AN thah)

This gesneriad is probably more familiar to growers by the common name of 'Temple Bells', which aptly describes the flower clusters that hang face down from the stalks. *Smithiantha* has very velvety leaves, and many people grow them for this beautiful foliage.

They like high humidity and warm temperatures. Although there are some compact growers, many hybrids are tall growing plants.

Eucodonia (you koh DOE nee ah)

Once classified as *Achimenes*, the *Eucodonia* is very similar to its rhizomatous cousin. Its main characteristic, however, is the heavy coating of hairs on leaves and stems.

Hybridizers have experimented with intergeneric crosses, that is to say, hybridizing two close but different families of plants. For example, crossing a *Eucodonia* with a *Smithiantha*. This not only produces exciting new plants but more new names to remember.

'Behavin' is a hybrid from a *Smithiantha/Eucodonia* cross which is called *Smithicodonia*. It is worth the effort to become familiar with the latin names by which they are recognized around the world. The common names of plants can be very confusing, as with the *Gloxinia*.

Smithicodonia 'Behavin'

Gloxinia (glock SIN ee ah)

True Gloxinia should not be confused with the Sinningia speciosa which is commonly called the 'Florist Gloxinia'. Some true Gloxinia have beautiful red flowers, and others such as the very 'Episcia-like' Gloxinia lindeniana shown above, have quite different white and blue flowers. The velvety leaves are dark copper green with light green markings.

From an Introduction to Gesneriads, African Violets and their Relatives

Know Your Fertilizers

Nitrogen: gives dark green color to plants and promotes rapid growth. Nitrogen makes up nearly 4/5 of the air; therefore there is really no shortage of this element as a gas. It is colorless, odorless, and tasteless. In the soil, nitrogen combines with living organisms and the decomposed residues of plants and animals which is called organic matter. There are many sources of nitrogen on the market. The most commonly known are: ammonium sulphate, sodium nitrate, calcium nitrate, urea, ammophos, animal guanos, blood meal, and bone meal. There are many others including liquid nitrogen, called anhydrous ammonia, which is applied usually in irrigation systems. The liquid fish and whale fertilizers also contain nitrogen. In fertilizer mixes, nitrogen is the percentage named first. For instance, in a 6-10-4 mix, there is 6 per cent nitrogen.

Phosphorus: In fertilizer mixes, nitrogen is the percent in terms of available phosphoric acid. It is the second percentage in a fertilizer mix, or in a 6-10-4 mix, there is 10 per cent available phosphoric acid. Phosphorus stimulates early root formation and root growth. With better root development, plant vigor is increased to where the plant can withstand sudden changes in weather. Phosphorus gives rapid and vigorous starts to plants and stimulates blooming. Phosphorus is needed to change the starch in plants to sugar. Phosphorus aids in balancing the mineral relationship in the soil, and this aids in increasing resistance to disease. Sources of phosphorus are natural deposits of phosphorus-bearing rock and iron ores, together with animal bones. Large deposits are found in Idaho, Utah, Montana, Wyoming, and in some eastern states. Phosphorus is available as phosphate rock-finely ground rock in its natural state - bone meal, super phosphate, ammoniated super phosphate, and there is some in the liquid fish and whale fertilizers.

Potash or Potassium: In fertilizers this element is always stated in terms of potash. It is the third percentage in a fertilizer formula, or the "4" in a 6-10-4 mix. Potash imparts increased vigor and disease resistance to plants. It improves the quality of plants, and also helps the development of root systems. Potash is often called the alkali of life because potassium-containing materials, such as wood ashes, were the first fertilizers used by humans. Potash is indispensable in the formation of chlorophyll which is produced by the aid of sunlight which brings about starch formation. Sources of potash in mixed fertilizers are usually sulphate or murlate of potash.

Calcium or Lime: Calcium promotes early root formation and growth. It improves general plant vigor. Calcium influences the intake of other plant foods. It occurs in soils in many different minerals, varying greatly in the proportion of lime present. Calcium is used for correcting soil acidity or for sweetening the soil. Calcium materials are carbonates (limestone), caustic lime, and by-products of blast furnaces. Oyster shells make wonderful liming materials when finely ground.

Iron is available as plant food in two forms - ferric sulphate and iron chelate. Iron is used in the correction of iron chlorosis - a yellowing of leaves.

Zinc is linked with iron and manganese in the formation of chlorophyll.

Magnesium (also known as Epsom salts) is an essential part of chlorophyll. It regulates the uptake of other plant foods and acts as a carrier of phosphorus.

Manganese increases the availability of calcium, magnesium, and phosphorus. It aids in synthesis (union of elements) of chlorophyll and functions in photosynthesis (a process of green plants by which carbohydrates are formed from the carbon dioxide and water of the air under the influence of light).

Sulphur promotes increased root growth. It helps maintain dark green color and encourages more vigorous plant growth. It corrects alkalinity of the soil.

Molybdenum: This element seems essential in nitrogen utilization by the plant.

From *Blossoms*, publication of the Seattle AVS, Washington

Recognizing Immature Leaves

by Pauline Bartholomew • From her book, *Growing to Show*

Immature leaves (which are not to be confused with off-sized leaves) are always found in the outermost row of leaves as plantlets emerge from the base of the mother leaf, the first leaves to form are immature (baby) leaves. Eventually sturdy, true leaves begin to form and the immature ones progress to the outer row.

As each succeeding row of leaves progresses outward there will be a set of three leaves that, while mature at one time, stop developing at the same rate as the other leaves in the same row. This lack of development becomes apparent as these leaves reach the outermost row. This is a natural occurrence; as new leaves form, older ones fade and die. Thus, each leaf is programmed to eventually self-destruct. Three by three they reach a stage where development slows and, if not removed by the grower, will naturally weaken and die.

CLUES TO LOOK FOR:

1. **Leaf size:** The leaves are smaller than the others in the same row.
2. **Petiole size:** Petioles are smaller, weaker, and paler in color.
3. **Leaf texture:** Leaves are not as deeply quilted, as curly, or as wavy, according to the variety.
4. **Suckers:** Suckers often form at the base of the petiole of an immature leaf.

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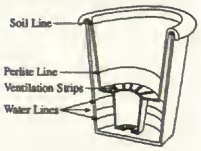

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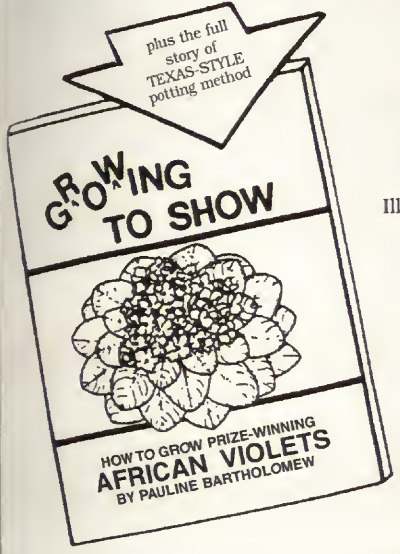
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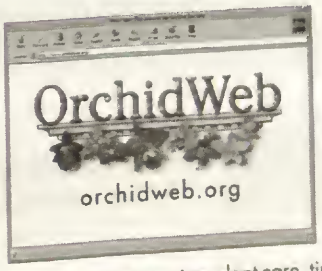

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Violet Showcase **Plant Assortment** - Six different standard sized starter plants will be chosen for you from our available stock when your order arrives. We will choose an assortment of leaf and blossom types and bloom color in each shipment. All plants will be husky, well-rooted, named, labeled varieties in 2 1/4" pots. Our choice of varieties - **only $25.00** which includes packing and Priority Mail shipping, and a free catalog/list, or $40.00 per dozen plants. *We ship plants May thru October.*

Violet Showcase **Basic Supplies Kit** - All of the supplies necessary to try wick watering (a great way to grow violets!) PLUS step-by-step instructions. Includes an 8 oz. pouch of Peters 12-36-14 African Violet Plant Food, a 3 quart bag of Potting Medium (especially mixed for wicking), 6 clear 16 oz. wicking reservoirs with lids (no hole in lids), six 3" tub pots, six 3 1/2" tub pots, 6 yds. of wicking cord, and our best-selling **VIOLETS THE SHOWCASE WAY** booklet. **$16.00** which includes UPS shipping and handling, and a free catalog/list. We ship supplies year round.

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Telephone (303) 761-1770 • FAX (303) 762-1808

Visit our web page at www.violetshowcase.com

The Violet Showcase

3147 South Broadway - Dept AV - Englewood, Colorado 80113
Open Monday - Saturday 10 to 5 (Mountain Time) closed Sunday & Tuesday
Established 1969

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All grow and shape easily, are heavy bloomers, and are excellent either for show or as a "houseplant"

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MA'S TURNCOAT. Large sdbl. blush-white to cream-pink stars w/distinctive blue purple pinwheel stripes. Excellent, dark, variegated foliage. **Chimera. $15.00**

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ROB'S BAHAMA MAMA. Sdbl. hot-pink with frosted rose overlay. Dark, quilted, Champion variegation. Extremely profuse semimini in the "hottest" of colors—it glows! **$4.00**

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Our own hybrids. All are spectacular, and easy to grow and bloom, even in windows. Care identical to violets. **All $4.00 each.**

BRISTOL'S BLUE BONNET. Lovely periwinkle-blue blooms with darker center and distinct butter-yellow eye. Extremely heavy bloomer, always covered with dozens of blooms. Excellent.

BRISTOL'S DAISY JANE. Striking, large white blooms w/thick, very dark crimson brush marks emanating from center. Sure to be an all-time favorite, always in heavy bloom. Wow!!

BRISOL'S GUM DROP. Adorable burgundy pansies held in nice bouquet over compact foliage. Great bloomer. Very cute.

BRISTOL'S NOSE PRINT. Upper petals white, tipped purple, lower petals dark purple-red, then edged white. Very easy grower, always in bloom, and certainly distinctive.

BRISTOL'S PAJAMA PARTY. Deep rose-pink blooms heavily streaked with white fantasy. The best fantasy we've seen of this color. Very unusual and a good bloomer.

BRISTOL'S PINK LEMONADE. Lightly fringed rose-pink blooms with dark maroon stripes on bright yellow lower throat. Good and constant bloomer, very easy grower.

BRISTOL'S RIBBON CANDY. Double bright pink round blooms with dark red veining on white throat. Very profuse and constant bloomer, it's aptly named.

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PLASTIC FLOWER POTS

SIZE	COLOR	TYPE	10 ct	25 ct	50 ct	100 ct	500 ct
2-1/8"	Wt. or TC	Rd. Tub	1.00	1.80	3.50	6.50	30.00
2-1/4"	Gr. or Wt.	Rd. or Sq.	1.05	2.15	3.90	7.25	33.00
2-3/8"	Wt. or TC	Rd. Tub	1.10	2.25	4.25	8.00	38.00
2-1/2"	Gr. or Wt.	Rd. or Sq.	1.15	2.40	4.55	8.60	40.50
3"	Gr. or Wt.	Rd. Tub, Std. Sq.	1.30	2.95	5.25	9.80	44.50
3-1/2"	Gr. or Wt.	Rd. Tub	1.45	3.60	6.60	12.00	55.00
4"	Gr. or Wt.	Rd. Tub	1.75	3.85	7.25	13.50	59.40
4-1/2"	Gr. or Wt.	Rd. Tub	2.40	5.60	8.00	15.50	73.00
5"	Gr. or Wt.	Rd. Tub	2.90	6.75	12.50	23.00	105.00
6"	Gr. or Wt.	Rd. Tub	3.40	8.20	15.40	28.80	134.00
6-1/2"	Gr. or Wt.	Rd. Tub	4.00	9.50	18.00	34.00	160.00

MICRO MINI POTS

1-1/2"	Terracotta	1.20	2.75	4.80	9.00	39.50
Snap-On Saucer	Terracotta	1.20	2.75	4.80	9.00	39.50

PLASTIC PAN POTS

5"	Gr. or Wt.	2-1/2" Deep	2.90	6.75	12.50	23.00	105.00
6"	Gr. or Wt.	3-3/4" Deep	4.10	9.75	18.50	35.00	165.00
7"	Gr. or Wt.	4" Deep	6.00	14.50	28.00	54.00	
8"	Gr. or Wt.	4" Deep	7.60	18.50	36.00	70.00	

PLASTIC WICK WATER RESERVOIRS *(Recessed snap-on lids, wicks not included)*

Size	Height	Diameter	Holds Pot Up To	10	25	50	100	500
8 oz	1-3/4"	4-1/2"	5"	3.50	8.00	15.00	29.00	140.00
16 oz	3"	4-1/2"	5"	4.00	9.50	17.00	32.00	150.00
32 oz	3-1/4"	6"	7"	6.00	14.00	27.00	53.00	250.00

Lids or containers only - 1/2 listed price

PLASTIC LABELS

	100	500	1000
3" White, Red, Orange, Yellow, Green Blue, Lavender, Pink	1.10	5.25	8.00
4" White, Green, Blue, Lavender, Pink, Red, Yellow	1.40	6.25	11.00
5" White, Lavender	1.65	7.50	14.50
4 1/2" White only	2.00	9.00	17.00

PERMA-NEST TRAYS - Light Green - No Holes

	1	6	12
4" x 8" x 2-1/2"	1.00	5.50	10.75
8" x 8" x 2-1/2"	1.60	9.00	16.80
8" x 12" x 2-1/2"	1.75	9.90	18.60
11" x 22" x 2-3/4" Lt. Green or Beige	5.50	31.50	60.00

CLEAR DOME

Fits 11" x 22" trays $2.25 ea. Dome and Tray combo $7.25 each

Elisa's African Violet Rings

			1	6	12	25	50
6" (Mini)	Gr. only	Fits up to 3" pot	1.00	5.25	9.75	20.00	34.50
9"	Gr. only	Fits 3" to 5" pot	1.15	6.00	11.00	23.00	39.00
13"	Gr. only	Fits 5" to 8" pot	1.40	7.15	13.25	24.00	42.00

FREDETTE'S ALLEGRO Plant Tonic

Excellent for starting leaves and small plants.

Use 3 tsp. per gal. water. 4 oz. bottle

Each $3.25, 3 for $9.50, 6 for $18.00, 12 for $34.00

SWIFT'S "MOIST-RITE" PLANTER

White - Green - Black

$4.00 each - 6/19.20 - 12/36.40 - 24/67.00

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48 STATES

East of the Mississippi - $5.25; West of Mississippi - $5.75

West of the Rockies - $6.25; Rural Areas please add $1.50

All Others - Actual Cost

Massachusett Residents include 5% Sales Tax

Please include STREET or ROAD, Zip Code and Phone Number

PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE.

DYNA-GRO FERTILIZERS

Formula	Type	Size / Price 1/2 pt.	1 pt.	1 qt.
7-9-5	Plant Food	$4.95	$7.95	$12.00
3-12-6	Bloom	4.95	7.95	12.00
9-3-6	Foliage Pro	4.95		11.00
0-0-3	Pro-Tekt	4.95		10.00
Concentrate	K-L-N	10.00		
Neem Oil		7.50		24.50
Dolomite Limestone				2 lbs./$1.75
Charcoal		20 oz.		40 oz.
No. 4 Coarse or	No. 6 Medium	1.85		3.50
		4 qts.	8 qts.	16 qts.
Vermiculite	No. 2 Coarse	1.75	3.00	5.75
Perlite	Coarse	1.75	3.00	5.75
Canadian Peat Moss		$1.75	3.00	$5.50

TROY Capillary watering mat – a full 4 feet wide

$4.00 per running yard – whole yard lengths

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8 oz. - $4.95
16 oz. - $7.25
32 oz. - $13.50
1 gal. - $35.00

SUPERTHRIVE

1/2 oz. - $3.00
1 oz. - $4.25
2 oz. - $6.00
4 oz. - $9.25

DANDY POTS

2-1/4" - 4"

OYAMA PLANTERS

1-1/2" - 2-1/2" - 3-1/2"
4"-5"-6"

FLORA CART

Light Stands

KEIKIGROW PLUS

15 ml - $21.50